



Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs  
and Primary Sector

# ENTREPRENEURS DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR ARUBA

2025 -2028



# Table of Contents

Foreword	3
List of Abbreviations	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	7
Sustainable Development Goals	8
Strategic Framework for SME Development	9
1. SMEs Sector in Aruba	11
1.1 Aruban SMEs Sector	11
2. Governing Principles of the Entrepreneurs Policy	13
2.1 SMEs Policy Goal, Objectives and Principles	13
3. Challenges, Opportunities and Desired Development of the SMEs Sector	15
3.1 Challenges	15
3.1.1. Education and training for SMEs, along with alignment of educational programs to labor market needs	15
3.1.2. Institutional and regulatory framework	17
3.1.3. Supportive Policy Framework – Fiscal Incentive Measures	18
3.1.4. Operational environment when starting a business	20
3.1.5. Support services for SMEs and startups	20
3.1.6. Access to credit and financing mechanisms	21
3.1.7. Support for priority economic sectors	21
3.1.8. Internationalization of SMEs	22
3.2 Opportunities	22
3.2.1. Education and training for SMEs, along with alignment of education programs to labor market needs	22
3.2.2. Institutional and regulatory framework	24
3.2.3. Supportive Policy Framework – Fiscal Incentive Measures	25
3.2.4. Operational environment when starting a business	29
3.2.5. Support services for SMEs and startups	30
3.2.6. Access to credit and financing mechanisms	31
3.2.7. Support for priority economic sectors	32
3.2.8. Internationalization of SMEs	34
3.3 The Ideal Scenario	36
3.4 SME Policy Framework	37
4. Programs and Achievements	41
4.1 IDEA, Iniciativa pa Desaroyo di Empresa Arubano	41
4.2 Exprodesk	41

4.3 Aruba Chamber of Commerce and Industry	42
4.4 ATIA, Aruba Trade and Industry Association	42
4.5 ARINA, Aruba Investment Agency	43
4.6 Free Zone Aruba (FZA) NV	44
5. Action Plan 2025- 2028	45
Appendices Review Entrepreneurs Policy 2018 – 2021 (extended to 2024)	48
Appendix 1: IDEA’s Programs and Achievements to Date	48
Appendix 2: Exprodesk’s Services and Activities	56
Appendix 3: CoC Events and Programs	64
Appendix 4: ATIA’s Services and Events	66
Appendix 5: Action Plan for FZA 2025 – 2028	67

## Foreword

As Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Primary Sector, it is my great pleasure to present the Entrepreneurs Policy 2025–2028, a key instrument in advancing Aruba’s vision for a resilient, inclusive, and innovation-driven economy.

Entrepreneurship lies at the heart of our national development. It drives job creation, fosters innovation, strengthens communities, and fuels economic diversification. In the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*<sup>1</sup>, the Government of Aruba has made clear its commitment to empowering entrepreneurs, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as they represent the backbone of our private sector. By supporting their growth and sustainability, we are investing in the future of Aruba.

This policy reflects the government’s priorities to simplify the process of doing business, improve access to finance, promote innovation, and support local entrepreneurship across key sectors; from sustainable energy, FinTech, and creative industries to agriculture and the revitalization of our urban centers in Oranjestad and San Nicolas, and the redevelopment of the refinery area in San Nicolas for new economic development. It is through these targeted interventions that we aim to stimulate opportunities for all and build a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient economy, one that benefits every citizen.

I would like to sincerely acknowledge the Aruba Trade Board for their dedication and collaboration in the development of this policy. As key stakeholders, they worked together with the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce and Industry to produce a comprehensive and forward-looking roadmap that aligns fully with the strategic direction of the government.

Together, let us continue to foster a strong entrepreneurial culture: one that is inclusive, innovative, and prepared for the opportunities of tomorrow.

### **Geoffrey B. Wever**

Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Primary Sector  
Government of Aruba

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<sup>1</sup> Gabinete AVP-FUTURO. (2025). *Programa di Gobernacion 2025-2028*.

## List of Abbreviations

<b>AHATA</b>	Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association
<b>AIP</b>	Agri-Innovation Park
<b>ATIA</b>	Aruba Trade and Industry Association
<b>AR</b>	Algemene Rekenkamer (Court of Audit)
<b>ARINA</b>	Aruba Investment Agency
<b>BBO/BAVP/BAZV</b>	Combined Tax on Business Turnover and Social Security Contributions
<b>BMKB</b>	Borgstelling MKB-kredieten (Dutch SME Credit Guarantee Scheme)
<b>BMKB-G</b>	Green SME Credit Guarantee Scheme
<b>CBS</b>	Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Central Bureau of Statistics of Aruba)
<b>CCI</b>	Cultural and Creative Industries
<b>CBA</b>	Centrale Bank van Aruba (Central Bank of Aruba)
<b>CoC/ KvK</b>	Chamber of Commerce and Industry Aruba / Kamer van Koophandel en Nijverheid Aruba
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>DCALFA</b>	Dutch Caribbean Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries Alliance
<b>DE</b>	Departamento di Enseñansa (Department of Education of Aruba)
<b>DEACI</b>	Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce & Industry of Aruba
<b>DESPA</b>	Departamento di Salud Publico di Aruba (Department of Public Health of Aruba)
<b>DFIN</b>	Directie Financiën (Department of Finance of Aruba)
<b>DI</b>	Departamento di Impuesto (Aruba Tax Office)
<b>DPL</b>	Departamento di Progreso Laboral (Department for Job Placement of Aruba)
<b>DRH</b>	Departamento di Recurso Humano (Department of Human Resources of Aruba)
<b>DTI</b>	Dienst Technische Inspectie (Department for Technical Inspections of Aruba)
<b>DWJZ</b>	Directie Wetgeving en Juridische Zaken (Department of Legislation and Legal Affairs of Aruba)
<b>EPE</b>	Enseñansa Pa Empleo (Government Vocational Department of Aruba)
<b>Exprodesk</b>	Export Promotion Desk
<b>FZA</b>	Free Zone Aruba (FZA) N.V.
<b>GBA</b>	Gemeentelijke Basisadministratie Persoonsgegevens (Dutch Municipal Personal Records Database)
<b>IDEA</b>	Iniciativa pa Desaroyo di Empresa Arubano (Initiative for the Development of Aruban Enterprises)
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>KBA</b>	Korps Brandweer Aruba (Aruba Fire Department)
<b>KPA</b>	Korps Politie Aruba (Aruba Police Force)
<b>PPP</b>	Public-Private Partnership
<b>RDA</b>	Refineria di Aruba N.V.
<b>RVO</b>	Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland
<b>SBA</b>	European Union Small Business Act
<b>SDGs</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>UA</b>	Universiteit van Aruba (University of Aruba)
<b>UBO</b>	Ultimate Beneficial Owner
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

## Executive Summary

The Entrepreneurs Policy 2025–2028 presents the Government of Aruba’s strategic roadmap to empower entrepreneurs, foster innovation, and strengthen Aruba’s private sector as a key driver of inclusive, sustainable, and diversified economic growth. Developed by the DEACI in collaboration with key stakeholders, this policy is aligned with the core commitments of the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*.

Entrepreneurship is the backbone of Aruba’s economy. SMEs represent 96% of all active businesses, employ 42% of the private sector workforce, and generate 36% of wages. This policy acknowledges that unlocking the full potential of SMEs is essential for achieving economic resilience, innovation, and inclusive growth.

### Vision and Goals

The overarching goal of the Entrepreneurs Policy is:

“To foster an environment that encourages businesses to participate and drive growth, enabling them to make a more significant contribution to the diversification of the economy through job creation and wealth generation.”

This is pursued through an integrated approach that tackles institutional inefficiencies, builds entrepreneurial capacity, improves access to finance, and strengthens Aruba’s priority sectors.

Effective 1 January 2026, Aruba implemented a package of fiscal incentives and regulatory measures to strengthen the business climate and accelerate diversification. This package includes: targeted incentives to stimulate urban redevelopment in Oranjestad and San Nicolas, a Start-up Scheme for new companies operating in promising sectors, a modernization of the fiscal treatment of fringe benefits to support talent attraction and retention, and clarification of permitted service activities in the Free Zones through a “positive list.” These measures provide concrete levers to operationalize the Entrepreneurs Policy 2025–2028 and should be actively communicated and made accessible through coordinated support services.

### Strategic Policy Areas

The policy is structured around seven key pillars for SME development:

- 1. Education and training for SMEs as well as educational alignment to the labor market:** The policy promotes early entrepreneurship education, vocational training, and adult education programs to build essential 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, financial management, and innovation capacity. It encourages stronger alignment between education and labor market demands to address skills mismatches and prepare a future-ready workforce.
- 2. Institutional and regulatory framework:** Aruba’s business environment faces bureaucratic inefficiencies and fragmented regulation. The policy calls for the simplification of administrative processes, the reduction of regulatory burdens, and the formalization of SME-focused legislation. Incentives such as tax benefits, simplified reporting requirements, and support for legislative reform are proposed.
- 3. Operational environment when starting a business:** Starting a business in Aruba still involves complex procedures across multiple entities. The government is planning to implement a One-Stop Shop by 2026 to centralize licensing, permits, and business registration. Additional measures include digitalizing processes, reducing processing times, and integrating payment systems to improve ease of doing business.
- 4. Business development and support services:** Entities like IDEA, Exprodesk, the Aruba Chamber of Commerce, and ATIA play vital roles in offering advisory services,

training, mentoring, and networking opportunities. The policy recommends greater coordination among service providers, accreditation of support programs, and expansion of business incubation platforms, especially in priority sectors.

5. **Access to credit/finance:** Access to capital remains one of the most significant barriers for SMEs. The policy supports expanded financing through Qredits, including Agri-loans and the upcoming Creative Fund. The introduction of the BMKB scheme through the Netherlands in 2026 is expected to provide significant relief to entrepreneurs lacking collateral. The policy also promotes alternative financing models such as crowdfunding, angel investing, and PPP mechanisms.
6. **Development of eight key economic focus areas:** In line with the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*, the policy promotes SME growth in sectors such as:
  - Urban revitalization in Oranjestad
  - Urban revitalization in San Nicolas
  - Redevelopment of the Refineria di Aruba (RDA) terrain for new economic activity
  - Agriculture and Agri-Tech, through initiatives like the Agri-Innovation Park
  - Renewable Energy
  - FinTech and digital entrepreneurship
  - Creative and Cultural Industries (Orange Economy)
  - Affordable and sustainable housing

Specific incentives, infrastructure development, and targeted programs will support entrepreneurship in these priority areas.

7. **Internationalization of SMEs:** Aruba's export potential remains underutilized. The policy emphasizes strengthening Exprodesk as the central hub for export promotion, finalizing and implementing the Export Policy, and increasing SME participation in international markets. Recommendations include improving access to trade finance, technical export training, and removing procedural and digital barriers to cross-border trade.

### **Implementation and Monitoring**

The policy includes a detailed Action Plan 2025-2028, with clear responsibilities for government and non-governmental actors, supported by regular monitoring and evaluation. Emphasis is placed on data collection, impact assessments, public-private dialogue, and institutional capacity building to ensure that policies are responsive and result-oriented.

### **Conclusion**

Aruba's economic future depends on the vitality and creativity of its entrepreneurs. By addressing structural challenges, embracing innovation, and fostering inclusive growth, the Entrepreneurs Policy 2025–2028 charts a bold and practical course toward a more dynamic, competitive, and resilient economy; one in which opportunity is accessible to all, and businesses of all sizes can thrive.

## Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the backbone of Aruba's economy, a key driver of innovation, job creation, and sustainable development. In recognition of its vital role, the Government of Aruba has prioritized entrepreneurship in its *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*, with a clear commitment to fostering economic diversification, innovation, and inclusive growth.

This Entrepreneurs Policy 2025–2028 builds on that vision. It outlines the government's strategic approach to strengthening Aruba's entrepreneurial ecosystem by removing barriers, unlocking talent, and stimulating enterprise in every corner of our island. Guided by the values of *oportunidad pa tur hende* (opportunity for all), *bon gobernacion* (good governance), and *desaroyo sostenibel* (sustainable development), this policy supports entrepreneurs of all backgrounds, from young innovators and women-led startups to community-based microenterprises and scaling SMEs. The Policy translates the government's commitment to empowering entrepreneurs into actionable strategies and programs.

In alignment with the strategic direction outlined in the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*, this policy supports the government's commitment to developing eight key economic focus areas: Oranjestad and San Nicolas as revitalized urban centers; the Refineria di Aruba (RDA) terrain as a strategic site for new economic development; commercial agriculture to enhance food security and local production; FinTech and the creative industries as drivers of digital and cultural innovation; sustainable housing, including senior living developments, to meet growing social needs; and renewable energy to advance Aruba's transition toward a green economy. By fostering entrepreneurship across these sectors, the policy contributes directly to national goals for inclusive, diversified, and future-proof economic development.

In support of these priority focus areas, Aruba has already taken concrete steps to strengthen entrepreneurship through instruments that entered into force on 1 January 2026. These include fiscal incentives aimed at accelerating city-center redevelopment in Oranjestad and San Nicolas, a Start-up Scheme to support newly established companies in promising sectors, updated rules for the fiscal treatment of secondary employment benefits, and an updated Free Zone services framework through a positive list of permitted activities. Together, these measures enhance the enabling environment and directly support the Policy's priorities related to urban revitalization, innovation, and internationalization.

To position Aruba on a solid path toward long-term economic sustainability, it is crucial to transform the current development model for SMEs into a more forward-looking one. The Entrepreneurs Policy 2025–2028 is therefore vital in advancing this shift by fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports the growth of innovative, competitive, and sustainable businesses.

In today's rapidly evolving landscape, characterized by technological innovation, globalization, and shifting consumer demands, a dynamic environment for sustainable economic progress must be built upon entrepreneurship, the pursuit of emerging industry opportunities, enhanced business productivity, and new investment inflows. At the same time, it is vital to address structural challenges, particularly by reducing the cost of doing business and improving the investment climate.

The government's approach, as stated in the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*, emphasizes good governance to promote sustainable economic development. This includes

the creation of new investment and employment opportunities and a concerted effort to reduce the cost of living. In this regard, lowering the cost of doing business, beyond current measures, and minimizing bureaucratic inefficiencies are essential to cultivating a healthy investment climate that will drive economic growth.

While this Policy is designed to support all businesses in Aruba, special emphasis is placed on SMEs, which account for approximately 3,700 businesses in the country, constitute 96% of all active businesses, employ 42% of the private sector workforce, and represent 36% of total wages and salaries.

The goal of this Policy is: “To foster an environment that encourages businesses to participate and drive growth, enabling them to make a more significant contribution to the diversification of the economy through job creation and wealth generation.” This aligns with the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*, specifically by stimulating sustainable economic growth, fostering innovation, and empowering SMEs to thrive as key drivers of entrepreneurship and economic diversification across the island.

## Sustainable Development Goals

Although the SDGs are not explicitly referenced in the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*, the priorities and strategic direction of the Government of Aruba are strongly aligned with the principles of the 2030 Agenda. The program emphasizes economic diversification, inclusive growth, environmental sustainability, good governance, and strong public-private collaboration; core pillars that mirror key SDG objectives. As such, this Entrepreneurs Policy contributes to advancing the SDGs in Aruba by promoting responsible economic development, innovation, and equal opportunity, in line with both national ambitions and global commitments.

SMEs play a critical role in advancing the 2030 Agenda for SDGs within Aruba's national policy. The government is committed to providing a transparent, integrity-driven, and well-governed administration that prioritizes responsible public finances. At the heart of its efforts lies the well-being of its citizens. As economic policy continues to align with the SDGs, the government actively considers and implements these goals across its policymaking and governance frameworks. These include, but are not limited to, eliminating poverty, hunger, and inequality, improving health and well-being, enhancing access to quality education and employment, fostering sustainable economic growth, supporting innovation and resilient infrastructure, ensuring affordable and sustainable energy, and preserving natural resources such as drinking water, oceans, and wetlands.

Aruba has embraced the transformational path outlined by the United Nations 2030 Agenda and recognizes the private sector and civil society as key partners in its implementation. In this regard, the government has committed to mainstreaming and localizing the implementation of 17 SDGs and their 169 targets. The government's vision for 2025-2028 strongly reflects this commitment, offering a holistic policy approach that reinforces entrepreneurship as a driver of sustainable development. This Entrepreneurs Policy primarily emphasizes three SDGs that are particularly significant for private sector development:

- **SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth:** This goal aims to sustain per capita economic growth through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation. It supports the development of high-value-added and labor-intensive sectors, fosters the growth of micro and small enterprises through improved access to finance, enhances

the capacity of domestic financial institutions, promotes resource efficiency, and emphasizes education and vocational training to increase SMEs' participation in the global value chain.

- **SDG 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure:** SDG 9 seeks to foster inclusive and sustainable industrial development, ensuring affordable and equitable access to infrastructure. It calls for an increased contribution of industry to employment and GDP, enhanced access for SMEs to financing, the adoption of clean and environmentally sustainable technologies, and the promotion of scientific research and innovation—both in the public and private sectors.
- **SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production:** This goal focuses on promoting resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, and access to essential services. It emphasizes the creation of green and decent jobs and encourages a transition to sustainable production and consumption patterns, including better waste management and reduced ecological footprints.

While these three SDGs are central to the Entrepreneurs Policy, the broader goals, spanning the five pillars of *People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership*, are equally relevant to private sector engagement and national development. The SDGs offer a strategic opportunity for inclusive community development through strengthened collaboration between government and the private sector, with the shared aim of eradicating poverty, protecting the environment, and promoting prosperity for all.

## Strategic Framework for SME Development

This Entrepreneurs Policy integrates the European Union's (EU) Small Business Act (SBA), which acknowledges the central role of SMEs in the economy. Introduced in 2008, the SBA marked the first comprehensive SME policy framework for EU Member States. The four main priorities of the SBA are:

1. Promoting entrepreneurship
2. Less regulatory burden
3. Access to finance
4. Access to markets and internationalization

The founding principle of the SBA is the 'Think Small First' principle. Thanks to this principle, SMEs interests are considered at a very early stage of policymaking. This helps the EU develop SME-friendly legislation. DEACI has adopted these SBA priorities and integrated them into seven policy areas within this Entrepreneurs Policy. This approach is designed to foster a supportive ecosystem for SMEs in Aruba. The following seven areas aim to strengthen, formalize, and develop the SME sector and are as follows:

- A. Education and training for SMEs as well as educational alignment to the labor market
- B. Institutional and regulatory framework
- C. Operational environment when starting a business
- D. Business development and support services
- E. Access to credit/finance
- F. Support for priority economic sectors
- G. Internationalization of SMEs

This Entrepreneurs Policy adopts a holistic view of the SME landscape, cultivating an environment conducive to sustainable business growth and broader economic participation. The structure of the policy document reflects this integrated approach. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the SME sector in Aruba; Chapter 2 outlines the guiding principles of the policy; Chapter 3 explores the sector's challenges, opportunities, and ideal future scenario, offering targeted policy recommendations; Chapter 4 presents the key institutions supporting entrepreneurship and private sector development in Aruba; Chapter 5 introduces the comprehensive policy framework; and Chapter 6 concludes with an actionable implementation plan.

# 1. SMEs Sector in Aruba

This chapter provides an overview of the current state of the SME sector in Aruba, offering insights into the local business environment. By examining the position of SMEs, this analysis highlights the key structural challenges, emerging opportunities, and overall dynamics that shape the entrepreneurial landscape in Aruba. This contextual understanding serves as a foundation for identifying policy priorities and opportunities for growth within the sector.

## 1.1 Aruban SMEs Sector

In its recommendation 2022/2481/EC of December 14, 2022, the European Commission advised that the financial and staff thresholds used to define SMEs should be regarded as maximum limits. To simplify administration, Member States may choose to apply only one criterion, such as staff headcount, for certain policy purposes. Given the unavailability of reliable data on annual turnover and balance sheets in Aruba, this policy adopts the number of full-year equivalent employees<sup>2</sup> as the sole criterion for defining SMEs. Following this approach, Aruba defines its business size categories as follows:

- Micro enterprises: Fewer than 3 full-year equivalent employees
- Small enterprises: Fewer than 10 full-year employees
- Medium enterprises: Fewer than 50 full-year equivalent employees
- Large enterprises: 50 or more full-year equivalent employees

As of the latest estimates, Aruba is home to approximately 3700 SMEs<sup>3</sup>, representing 96% of all active registered companies. These enterprises collectively account for 42% of total employment and 36% of all wages and salaries paid in the economy. This significant contribution underscores the critical role of SMEs in Aruba's socio-economic development, job creation, and income generation.

*Table 1* categorizes these SMEs by economic activity, based on the Aruban Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities. The Wholesale and Retail Trade sector dominates the SME landscape, accounting for 23.7% of all SME activity, followed by notable participation in Accommodation and Food Services, Administrative and Support Services, and Construction.

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<sup>2</sup> 4 Full-year equivalent employees (excluding family workers without pay): the headcount corresponds to the number of annual work units being:

1. The number of persons who worked from January 1 until December 31 are considered full time within the enterprise in question or on its behalf during the entire reference year under consideration.
2. The number of persons who have not worked the full year and the number of seasonal workers is counted as fractions of the full year equivalent depending on how many days they were employed during the year.
3. Due to the lack of information regarding the number of hours worked in a week, part-timers are being calculated the same as persons who worked full-time and therefore their FY Equivalent will be determined based on days worked during a year.
4. The staff consists of: (a) employees; (b) persons working for the enterprise being subordinated to it and deemed to be employees under national law; (c) owner-managers that are on the payroll.

<sup>3</sup> CBS' latest preliminary data from the Business Count 2014. Therefore, these quantities are subject to change and cannot be considered as final results.

**Table 1: SMEs per Economic Activity 2021**

<b>Economic Activity</b>	<b>Percentage SMEs</b>	<b>Percentage Employees</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining and quarrying	0.3%	0.1%
Manufacturing	3.3%	3.4%
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0.1%	0.2%
Water supply; sewage, waste management and remediation activities	0.2%	0.1%
Construction	11.5%	10.0%
Wholesale, retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	23.7%	26.4%
Transportation and storage	2.6%	3.6%
Accommodation and food service activities	13.6%	17.4%
Information and communication	1.4%	1.5%
Financial and insurance activities	3.5%	4.0%
Real estate activities	3.6%	2.4%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	7.0%	5.4%
Administrative and support service activities	11.7%	12.3%
Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	0.0%	0.2%
Education	1.4%	1.5%
Human health and social work activities	7.3%	5.0%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	2.3%	2.7%
Other service activities	6.4%	3.5%
<b>Total Companies with &lt; 50 employees</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Source: Social Security Bank, 2021</i>		

The most recent trade data (excluding the Freezone) show that, of the 215 exporting businesses (including large enterprises), 143 SMEs generated AWG 33,899,252, accounting for 65% of total exports<sup>4</sup>. In comparison, 37 large enterprises contributed AWG 10,781,573 (21%)<sup>5</sup>, while 27 businesses with no recorded employees accounted for AWG 2,733,483 (5%). The remaining 9% of export value (AWG 4,526,534) was attributable to cargo and freight forwarders (CBS, 2021). See *Table 2* for an overview.

**Table 2: Export from Aruba for the year 2021 (excluding Freezone)**

<b>Year 2021</b>	<b>Companies</b>	<b>Sum AWG</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No employees recorded	27	2,733,483	5%
<50 employees	143	33,899,252	65%
≥ 50 employees	37	10,781,573	21%
Cargo and freight forwarders	8	4,526,534	9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>51,940,842</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Source: CBS Trade Statistics, 2021</i>			

<sup>4</sup> Final Export: imported goods that passed through customs, paid import duties, stayed in Aruba for a period of time and were shipped to another country for future sale or trade as well as some goods produced in Aruba (few).

<sup>5</sup> Excluding self-employed and companies not found.

## 2. Governing Principles of the Entrepreneurs Policy

Strong communities have a strong economy with strong, sustainable businesses. Therefore, the business environment must be improved to create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive. While SMEs and large enterprises share many of the same needs, smaller enterprises (ranging from ‘zero enterprises’ to micro, small, and medium-sized businesses) face greater challenges due to their size. Recognizing this, nowadays many advanced economies have shifted from SME-specific policies to broader Entrepreneurs’ Policies that address the needs of businesses of all sizes. Given the fact that Aruba is a small economy with very few large businesses, adopting an Entrepreneurs Policy, rather than an SME-specific Policy, is the more appropriate and effective approach.

### 2.1 SMEs Policy Goal, Objectives and Principles

This Entrepreneurs Policy reflects and operationalizes the priorities of the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*, particularly its focus on fostering entrepreneurship, streamlining public services, expanding access to finance, and driving sustainable, inclusive economic growth through advancing innovation and sustainability.

#### Goal

To foster an environment that encourages businesses to participate and drive growth, enabling them to make a more significant contribution to the diversification of the economy through job creation and wealth generation.

#### Objectives

- Improving the business culture by creating a stimulating environment for the development of SMEs.
- Promotion and strengthening of SMEs’ competitiveness and support for business startups.
- Regulating and centralizing the system for statistical monitoring of the SME sector.
- Creating and strengthening sustainable organizations and programs for business services and support for the SMEs sector, including coordinating the work of different government departments (especially the communication processes).
- Improving the financial support for SME development.
- Stimulating internationalization of SMEs (export).
- Supporting SMEs through the creation of public-private partnerships.
- Stimulating innovation and technological competitiveness (R&D projects and incubators).
- Strengthening education and consulting services for SMEs.
- Stimulating development and use of information-communication technologies.
- Improving the dialogue with the private sector.
- Creation of an appropriate and consistent regulatory environment with permanent structures for advocacy and governance, including relevant policies, legislative reform and taxation.
- Facilitating SME involvement in government e-procurement to foster local industry (and still be compliant with World Trade Organization (WTO) regulations).

## Principles

This Entrepreneurs Policy is underpinned by ten core principles that guide the formulation and implementation of SME-related policies at both the national and supra-national levels. These principles aim to cultivate a supportive ecosystem that fosters entrepreneurship, drives innovation, and promotes sustainable economic growth:

1. *Create an enabling environment for entrepreneurs and family businesses:* Promote conditions that stimulate entrepreneurship and provide strong, tailored support for both emerging and established family-run enterprises to grow and succeed.
2. *Apply the ‘Think Small First’ principle:* Ensure that the needs of small enterprises are prioritized by designing regulatory frameworks that are simple, accessible, and SME-friendly from the outset<sup>6</sup>.
3. *Make public administration more responsive to SMEs:* Enhance the responsiveness and efficiency of public institutions to better address the unique challenges faced by SMEs, particularly during startup and scaling phases.
4. *Adapt public policy tools to SME needs:* Strengthen support services, improve information accessibility, and facilitate SME participation in public procurement to boost their competitiveness and access to markets.
5. *Improve SMEs’ access to finance:* Create a supportive legal and financial ecosystem that eases access to credit and investment, including measures to secure timely payments in commercial transactions.
6. *Support SME expansion into regional markets:* Equip SMEs with the tools and resources to explore and leverage opportunities in regional markets, broadening their market reach and economic potential.
7. *Promote skills development and innovation:* Encourage continuous skills upgrading and support all forms of innovation to help SMEs keep pace with evolving technologies and shifting market conditions.
8. *Turn environmental challenges into growth opportunities:* Empower SMEs to adopt sustainable practices and transform environmental challenges into business opportunities through green innovation and access to eco-focused markets.
9. *Help SMEs capitalize on market growth:* Provide targeted support that enables SMEs to benefit from local and international market expansion and remain competitive in a dynamic global economy.
10. *Foster policy coherence and collaboration across levels:* Promote alignment and coordination of SME policies at both national and supra-national levels to ensure consistency, efficiency, and impactful support for the sector.

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<sup>6</sup> A practical application of “Think Small First” is ensuring that new fiscal and regulatory measures are not only adopted, but also usable and accessible for entrepreneurs and SMEs. The 1 January 2026 measures package—including redevelopment incentives for Oranjestad and San Nicolas, the Start-up Scheme for promising sectors, modernization of fringe-benefit rules, and the Free Zone positive list—should therefore be accompanied by simplified guidance, standardized templates, and coordinated support through the entrepreneurship ecosystem (e.g., One-Stop Shop, IDEA, Chamber of Commerce, and relevant agencies). This approach helps translate policy instruments into real uptake and measurable impact.

## 3. Challenges, Opportunities and Desired Development of the SMEs Sector

### 3.1 Challenges

This policy underscores the importance of continuously stimulating and supporting the sustainable development of SMEs, including startups, to maximize their economic impact and role in job creation. It acknowledges that SMEs face distinct challenges compared to larger enterprises and that even within the same sector, SMEs can vary widely in structure, capacity, and needs. These differences give rise to specific challenges and barriers that may prevent SMEs from realizing their full potential. A comprehensive understanding of these unique characteristics and constraints is essential for effectively addressing the obstacles that hinder SME growth. By doing so, SMEs can be better positioned to contribute meaningfully to sustainable economic development and employment generation in Aruba.

To foster the growth and long-term viability of SMEs, it is crucial to address the core elements shaping their business environment, including access to skills, institutions, finance, and fiscal support mechanisms. These include:

- Education and training for SMEs, along with alignment of educational programs to labor market needs,
- Institutional and regulatory frameworks,
- Supportive policy framework – fiscal incentive measures,
- Operational environment when starting a business,
- Support services for SMEs and startups,
- Access to credit and financing mechanisms
- Support for priority economic sectors, and
- Internationalization of SMEs.

These areas of focus are directly aligned with the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028* and the *Begunstigend beleid fiscale stimuleringsmaatsregelen en positieve lijst vrije zone per 1 januari 2026*, which emphasizes enabling conditions for SME growth, innovation, and economic resilience.

#### *3.1.1. Education and training for SMEs, along with alignment of educational programs to labor market needs*

#### **Entrepreneurs' education and training**

Enhancing the knowledge and skills of Aruban entrepreneurs, particularly in areas such as digital literacy and emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, is essential for navigating today's dynamic economic landscape. Education and training are vital tools for strengthening SME capabilities in management, administration, and human resources, ultimately driving performance and resilience.

Entrepreneurs continue to face challenges in acquiring diverse skills, from financial and strategic management to understanding international standards and market trends. Developing entrepreneurial competencies from an early age, through initiatives such as Kidpreneurs (primary education), Youthpreneurs (secondary), Youngpreneurs (tertiary), Silverpreneurs (60+), and Womenpreneurs, equips individuals with the mindset and skills

necessary for entrepreneurial success. These initiatives align with the government's commitment in the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028* to modernize the education system, integrate 21st-century skills, and prepare students for future economic opportunities, particularly in areas such as FinTech, digital commerce, and innovation.

### **Employees' education and training**

In today's knowledge-driven economy, where intangible assets and services play a growing role, the rapid pace of change demands ongoing skill development. Knowledge-intensive products and services accelerate technological progress, fueling innovation and transforming industries. In this environment, employee education and training are critical for cultivating a workforce that is not only skilled but also adaptable to change. Ongoing learning opportunities enable employees to acquire and update the competencies needed to keep pace with evolving industry requirements, new technologies, and shifting business needs. This continuous investment in human capital improves both individual performance and overall organizational efficiency, contributing to a company's long-term competitiveness and growth. However, small businesses often face structural and financial barriers in providing professional development opportunities. Many perceive employee training as a cost burden rather than a strategic investment, especially in contexts where business sustainability is narrowly equated with minimizing expenses. These constraints can limit staff development and, in turn, hinder innovation and productivity.

To address this, the Government of Aruba can promote Adult Education Programs that help employees improve their skills, particularly in areas experiencing rapid transformation such as digital literacy, data analysis, and green technologies. These programs should be designed to improve both technical abilities and soft skills, including communication, teamwork, leadership, adaptability, and problem-solving, ensuring employees are equipped to meet current and future business challenges. By prioritizing the continuous growth and development of employees, organizations can build a more engaged, agile, and high-performing workforce. Ultimately, this not only enhances productivity but also strengthens the economy's capacity for innovation, resilience, and growth.

### **Educational alignment to the labor market**

In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, aligning education with labor market demands is essential to ensure that students and future employees are equipped with the skills and competencies sought by employers. As businesses must continuously adapt to shifting industry requirements and technological advancements, education and training programs must also evolve to remain relevant and responsive.

This includes fostering proficiency in emerging technologies, which are increasingly critical for driving innovation and competitiveness. To meet these demands, curricula in Aruban schools and vocational education should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect both local economic priorities and global industry trends. Educational programs must integrate advanced technologies, practical skills, and up-to-date industry knowledge to close the gap between theoretical instruction and real-world application. Stronger collaboration between educational institutions and the private sector is vital to ensure that training programs align with current and future labor market needs. Such partnerships can help reduce skills mismatches, enhance employability, and better prepare students to contribute meaningfully to the workforce.

Ultimately, aligning education with labor market dynamics will foster a skilled, future-ready workforce capable of supporting sustainable economic growth and innovation.

### *3.1.2. Institutional and regulatory framework*

Currently, there is no dedicated legislation governing the development of SMEs in Aruba. These businesses often face challenges related to government regulations, administrative procedures, tax requirements, and the cost of doing business, among others. Nonetheless, some progress has been made. For example, in 2012, the business license fee was significantly reduced from AWG 2,000 to AWG 400, easing the financial burden on new enterprises. The business licensing process has also been streamlined and digitized since October 2020, enabling entrepreneurs to apply for business licenses online at any time and significantly reducing the time to issue licenses.

While reducing administrative costs has helped lower barriers to entry for aspiring entrepreneurs, there remains considerable potential to further stimulate SME growth. A notable development occurred on January 7, 2025, when a Ministerial Decree was issued to revise the income tax brackets in line with the State Ordinance on Personal Income Tax. The reform aims to strengthen purchasing power and offer financial relief to taxpayers in 2025. Aruba's personal income tax system is progressive, with the first bracket previously taxing incomes up to AWG 34,930 at a rate of 10%. As of January 1, 2025, this rate was reduced to 0%. Given the existing tax-free threshold of AWG 30,000, individuals (employees and sole proprietors) earning up to AWG 64,930 are now exempt from personal income tax entirely. Additionally, no wage tax will be withheld from employees and sole proprietors earning below this threshold. Although rates for higher-income brackets remain unchanged, the reduction in the first bracket still lowers the overall tax burden for individuals across all income levels. These reforms may enhance consumer spending and financial resilience but do not yet directly address the specific tax needs of SMEs.

A recurring implementation challenge is newly introduced fiscal and regulatory measures, while well-intended, do not automatically translate into broad-based uptake among entrepreneurs and SMEs. Effective 1 January 2026, Aruba introduced several instruments (redevelopment incentives for Oranjestad and San Nicolas, a Start-up Scheme for promising sectors, modernized rules for fringe benefits, and a Free Zone "positive list"). However, access can be hindered by administrative requirements, limited awareness, and capacity constraints, particularly for smaller firms. This underlines the need for clear guidance, predictable procedures, and coordinated institutional support so that reform outcomes are not limited to better-resourced market participants. These four measures are elaborated further in Sections 3.1.3 and 3.2.3: Supportive Policy Framework – Fiscal Incentive Measures.

On the other hand, on July 5, 2023, the Parliament of Aruba approved the Fiscal Plan 2023-Part II, which extended the changes introduced by the State Ordinance Fiscal Plan 2023. A key provision of this legislation was the implementation of a tax on the import of goods, known as the 'BBO on import' or 'BBO at the border', which took effect on August 1, 2023. This new tax has not made it administratively easier for local SMEs. The 'BBO on import' rate is set at 7%, aligning with the rate of BBO/BAVP/BAZV for locally supplied goods. Previously, imported goods were exempt from these indirect taxes (except import duties), while local goods were taxed at 7%, making self-importation a more cost-effective option for both businesses and consumers. The introduction of the 'BBO on import' aims to create a more level playing field, increase tax revenue, and strengthen compliance with the BBO/BAVP/BAZV regulations.

While businesses can deduct the tax paid on imported trade goods from the BBO/BAVP/BAZV on their sales, and in some cases even qualify for refund, this new regime has also introduced additional administrative burdens, particularly for SMEs with limited capacity to manage compliance requirements.

Aruba also lacks a structured system for conducting impact assessments of new policies and regulations. Without such evaluations, it is difficult to fully understand how measures like the 'BBO on import' affect the broader business environment, especially for SMEs. To effectively support SME development, comprehensive reforms are needed. These should include updates to the legal and fiscal frameworks, enhancements to banking services, and improved financial and operational security systems. Such reforms are essential for building a more conducive ecosystem in which SMEs can thrive and adapt to modern economic demands.

### *3.1.3. Supportive Policy Framework – Fiscal Incentive Measures*

#### **Favorable fiscal incentive framework for SMEs in Designated Economic Development Areas**

Despite the existence of favorable fiscal policies in Aruba, such as exemptions and reductions in corporate income tax, dividend tax, transfer tax, business turnover tax (BBO), and the AZV earmarked levy, a key challenge lies in ensuring that these measures are effectively accessed and utilized by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). As of 1 January 2026, Aruba implemented a package of fiscal stimulus measures, including *begunstigend beleid* (favorable policy measures) specifically aimed at supporting the economic development of the designated city centers of Oranjestad and San Nicolas, introduced as a concrete follow-up to recommendations made in the Commission Economic Recovery workstream on investment and fiscal incentives.

Complex eligibility requirements, limited awareness, and administrative capacity constraints may hinder SMEs from fully benefiting from these incentives, particularly within the economic development areas of Oranjestad and San Nicolas. In practice, the new urban incentive framework is designed with an “all-in or all-out” approach for executability: a taxpayer either fully qualifies for the incentive or not at all. This is intended to prevent mixed treatment (partly exempt/partly taxed) and to reduce administrative burden for both businesses and the tax authorities, but it also raises the threshold for compliance and documentation, especially for smaller firms.

In addition, the incentives for Oranjestad and San Nicolas are primarily structured around redevelopment and exploitation of (re)developed real estate within the designated areas, using vehicles such as a qualifying (exempt) company structure. The policy includes strict conditions, such as limiting activities and assets to those related to the redevelopment/exploitation purpose and provides that non-compliance can trigger retroactive withdrawal of the exemptions, which increases perceived risk for SMEs and may discourage participation without clear guidance and advisory support.

Without targeted support, coordination, and clear guidance, there is a risk that the positive impact of these fiscal measures on entrepreneurship, investment, and innovation remains below potential. Addressing this challenge is essential to ensure that favorable fiscal policies translate into inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

## **The start-up tax incentive within the corporate income tax framework**

The Start-up Scheme (effective 1 January 2026) aims to reduce early-stage tax burdens for newly incorporated companies in Aruba's promising sectors. Yet start-ups may struggle with administrative requirements and limited support capacity. The scheme applies to firms incorporated on/after 1 January 2026, is time-bound (first years of operation), and Companies as referred to in the National Ordinance Free Zones 2000 (AB 2000 no. 28) are excluded from this scheme, so clear guidance is needed to ensure innovative businesses are not unintentionally left out and that the incentive improves survival and growth.

Limited awareness, administrative complexity, and compliance requirements may discourage eligible start-ups from applying, particularly those with limited financial and managerial capacity. In addition, the targeted focus on promising sectors requires clear guidance and coordination to ensure that innovative businesses are not unintentionally excluded. Without adequate support, monitoring, and alignment with broader entrepreneurship support measures, there is a risk that the Start-up Scheme will not fully achieve its intended impact on innovation, business survival, and sustainable economic growth.

## **Modernizing the Fiscal Treatment of Fringe Benefits.**

Despite recent efforts to modernize the fiscal treatment of fringe benefits (secondary employment benefits), a key challenge lies in ensuring effective implementation and uptake across employers, particularly SMEs. Aruba introduced a revised regulation to modernize the *Regeling fiscale behandeling secundaire arbeidsvoorwaarden*, explicitly aiming to better align the framework with current labor market developments and international mobility, and the changes took effect on 1 January 2026.

The complexity of revised rules, limited awareness, and administrative capacity constraints may hinder businesses from fully utilizing the available facilities. In addition, inconsistent interpretation and lack of coordination across policy areas such as labor, education, and immigration could reduce the intended impact on talent attraction and workforce development. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that the modernized framework translates into improved competitiveness, employee retention, and sustainable entrepreneurial growth.

## **Designation of Permitted Service Activities within the Free Zones**

As of 1 January 2026, Aruba adopted a positive list defining which service activities are permitted in the Free Zone regime. While the designation of permitted service activities within Aruba's free zones offers strong potential for SME growth and international engagement, a key challenge lies in ensuring that the framework is clearly defined, effectively communicated, and accessible to smaller enterprises. Uncertainty regarding eligible activities, regulatory requirements, and operational procedures may discourage SMEs from entering the free zones or expanding into service-based exports.

In addition, administrative complexity and limited institutional coordination can create barriers to participation, particularly for SMEs with limited resources. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that the free zone regime supports broad-based SME participation, attracts high-value service activities, and contributes to sustainable and diversified economic development.

#### *3.1.4. Operational environment when starting a business*

According to the IMF, the cost of doing business in Aruba remains high, as establishing a new enterprise can take between four to six months and involves complex procedures spread across multiple government entities (IMF, 2015). The process typically begins with the creation of a legal business structure, such as a Corporation (NV), Limited Liability Company (VBA), or Foundation (Stichting), which must be formalized by a local notary. Depending on the type and scope of the business, various licenses and permits are required, each managed by different government institutions. This fragmented approach contributes to bureaucratic delays.

Currently, the average maximum processing time for a general business license is approximately four weeks, depending on their complexity and the external checks required. However, relocation or changes to or expansion of business purposes take between one to two weeks. Nevertheless, many efforts to streamline other licenses and permits have not succeeded, and these can take several months. SMEs do not yet have access to a centralized administrative platform, a One-Stop Shop, that would allow them to complete all licensing procedures through a single-entry point, making the startup process more cumbersome and time-consuming. Additionally, inefficient and lengthy processes for obtaining work permits, land and construction permits present further obstacles to physical infrastructure development, limiting the potential for SMEs to innovate and grow.

To address this, the Government of Aruba is working, under the framework of the *Landspakket* agreements, on the development of a digital One-Stop Shop, which is scheduled to become operational in 2026. This online portal will centralize all business permit applications and foster an integrated approach to business registration. It is designed to improve synergy and collaboration among the relevant departments and ensure that all permit requests are processed within six weeks of submission. Several ministries involved in the commercial permitting process will cooperate to create the One-Stop Shop, which will also require legislative changes and the allocation of dedicated personnel.

#### *3.1.5. Support services for SMEs and startups*

Support services for SMEs and startups are essential for promoting entrepreneurship and stimulating business growth. In Aruba, several government units, including IDEA, ARINA, and Exprodesk, provide assistance, alongside institutions such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Aruba Trade and Industry Association (ATIA), and the Free Zone Aruba (FZA) NV, which also provide advisory services for business.

Accessible and easily available information is crucial when SMEs are starting a business, registering property, or engaging in cross-border trade. While government websites and various departments' sites, particularly the 'Doing Business' section, offer valuable resources, the absence of a centralized and user-friendly digital platform creates obstacles for entrepreneurs, making it more difficult for them to navigate the processes of starting and running a business efficiently. To address this challenge, the development of a digital One-Stop Shop (a centralized hub consolidating all relevant government services and information) would greatly improve the accessibility and effectiveness of support for SMEs and startups, helping them operate more efficiently and with greater confidence. In the meantime, entrepreneurs can visit the websites of IDEA and ARINA, which provide valuable guidance on starting a business in Aruba, including step-by-step information on required procedures and available support services.

### 3.1.6. Access to credit and financing mechanisms

One of the most significant challenges facing local SMEs is limited access to financing, particularly the lack of affordable capital for entrepreneurs. While the government has taken steps to promote a more dynamic and competitive financing market, barriers remain. Notable initiatives include the collaboration with Qredits through the Business Academy, which provides SMEs with loans at attractive interest rates, and the upcoming BMKB-regeling (Borgstelling MKB-kredieten/ SME Credit Guarantee Scheme), whereby the Netherlands will provide loan guarantees for financing in Aruba. The BMKB scheme, set to launch in September 2025, will be accessible through qualified financial institutions on the island. Under this scheme, entrepreneurs can apply for loans with reduced collateral requirements, as the Dutch government will partially guarantee the financing, making it easier for SMEs to secure much-needed capital.

Despite these promising reforms, many entrepreneurs still have trouble accessing finance. The banking system continues to pose practical challenges for small businesses. Entrepreneurs often face high fees for basic transactions, and opening a business bank account typically takes 5 to 10 working days after all required documentation is submitted and signed, delaying business operations and increasing administrative burdens.

Moreover, there is a lack of targeted government initiatives to promote financial literacy or increase awareness about the risks and opportunities associated with financial products. This knowledge gap limits SMEs' ability to make informed financial decisions and access appropriate funding. Removing these barriers is critical to unlocking the full growth potential of Aruba's SME sector.

### 3.1.7. Support for priority economic sectors

In alignment with the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*, this policy recognizes eight key economic focus areas as central to Aruba's sustainable and inclusive development. However, SMEs face overlapping challenges that limit their ability to engage and contribute meaningfully. These include:

- Lack of specific incentives, fragmented programs, and weak institutional coordination reduce effectiveness.
- Few awareness campaigns or training workshops exist, especially in areas like the circular economy, limiting SMEs' ability to innovate or adopt sustainable practices.
- Insufficient knowledge of emerging technologies, e.g., Blockchain, AI, digital assets, limits competitiveness, efficiency, and ability to access new markets.
- Many entrepreneurs in the Orange Economy still operate informally, due to limited access to finance, formalization support, and dedicated incentives.
- Despite strong broadband infrastructure, a lack of digital literacy undermines innovation and growth among entrepreneurs.
- In Oranjestad and San Nicolas, deteriorating infrastructure, insufficient parking, high vacancy, safety concerns, and lack of affordable housing reduce entrepreneurial activity and private investment.
- Lack of a long-term plan, poor infrastructure, and environmental contamination leave the RdA terrain's economic potential untapped.
- High production costs, limited access to land and capital, outdated farming methods, and lack of Agri-education hinder scalability and food security goals.
- Absence of clear regulations, low institutional capacity, limited talent, and weak

ecosystem coordination prevent the FinTech sector growth.

- Rising housing costs, speculative vacation rentals, and limited low-income support reduce urban livability and deter young professionals.
- Regulatory delays, outdated grid infrastructure, and high investment costs restrict SME participation in green innovation.

Addressing these challenges through targeted, sector-specific support is essential to enable SMEs to formalize, innovate, scale, and drive Aruba's sustainable economic development.

### *3.1.8. Internationalization of SMEs*

Uncertainties and a lack of internationalization experience significantly hinder the ability of Aruban SMEs to engage in international markets. These businesses face a range of internal and external challenges, including uncertainty about which markets to enter, which entry strategies to pursue, such as exporting, licensing, joint ventures, or direct investment, and how to navigate the complexities of international trade. While the government promotes exports through Exprodesk, the absence of a comprehensive Export Policy limits the effectiveness of such efforts. An Export Policy is currently in development and must be finalized and approved to identify and address the key bottlenecks hindering international expansion, and to clearly define how the government can support SMEs through technical assistance, incentives, and capacity-building programs.

Currently, there is no dedicated funding or structured program to build export capacity among local businesses. This lack of support limits SMEs' ability to develop the skills, networks, and infrastructure necessary for competing in global markets.

Moreover, Aruba does not yet have a fully developed Quality Infrastructure (QI), the institutional framework that includes standardization, metrology, accreditation, conformity assessment, and market surveillance. Without this, SMEs struggle to meet international quality standards, which undermines their global competitiveness.

Additional barriers include high customs clearance costs and cumbersome import/export procedures, as well as high payment processing fees and limited adoption of alternative digital payment systems. These combined financial and procedural inefficiencies create significant obstacles for SMEs, discouraging their participation in cross-border trade.

Overcoming these challenges is essential for boosting the international competitiveness of Aruban SMEs and unlocking their potential in global markets. A coordinated approach involving policy reform, institutional strengthening, and targeted support will be critical to enabling SMEs to scale beyond Aruba's borders.

## **3.2 Opportunities**

### *3.2.1. Education and training for SMEs, along with alignment of education programs to labor market needs*

IDEA and Exprodesk are dedicated to promoting entrepreneurial growth and fostering innovation in Aruba. Both units offer specialized training tailored to diverse types of entrepreneurs, addressing the needs of various industries and business models.

With a strong emphasis on cultivating the next generation of leaders, IDEA not only provides help and guidance to existing and aspiring entrepreneurs, including SMEs, women entrepreneurs, Agripreneurs, and silver entrepreneurs (60+), but also focuses on empowering children and young entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, Exprodesk concentrates on supporting potential exporters. Through customized programs and skill-building initiatives, both units contribute to the development of core competencies in areas, such as business management, leadership, technical expertise, and soft skills. By supporting both aspiring and established entrepreneurs, IDEA and Exprodesk help strengthen Aruba's entrepreneurial ecosystem and promote sustainable business growth.

Similarly, the Chamber of Commerce, ATIA, and various SMEs from the private sector provide valuable workshops and professional training on relevant topics throughout the year. For instance, Qredits provides valuable guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs in launching their own businesses, along with a range of online entrepreneurship programs and training. In addition, various private consultants are offering courses and training designed for individuals looking to establish a business or deepen their knowledge in entrepreneurship. These offerings are just a few examples of the numerous education and training opportunities available for SMEs. To further enhance and consolidate these opportunities, this policy presents the following recommendations.

## **Recommendations**

### **A. Steps to be taken by the government**

#### **1. Entrepreneur education and training**

- Continue collaboration between DEACI and accredited training institutions to provide standard and vocational training for employers.
- Develop programs and activities that address local SME needs through cooperation with support service desks.
- Modernize the education system, integrate 21st-century skills, and prepare students for future economic opportunities, particularly in areas such as FinTech, digital commerce, and innovation.

#### **2. Employee education and training**

- Promote and organize training under Adult Education Programs in partnership with relevant stakeholders.
- Focus on continuous skills enhancement in response to evolving market demands and technological developments.

#### **3. Education alignment to labor market**

- Initiate partnerships through DEACI to better align education with labor market needs.
- Update vocational curricula (EPE) to reflect shifting employer and sector demands.

### **B. Steps to be taken by stakeholders**

## 1. Market relevance review

- The Chamber of Commerce (CoC) and ATIA should conduct surveys to evaluate whether current workshops, training, and education still meet present-day market knowledge needs.
- CoC, ATIA, and Qredits should continue providing training and educational programs for (aspiring) entrepreneurs and SMEs, focusing on strengthening their entrepreneurial skills, financial management, innovation, and sustainable business practices.

### 3.2.2. Institutional and regulatory framework

Some legislative reforms have been implemented, including the Business Establishment Policy Guidelines by the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce & Industry of Aruba (DEACI) which have streamlined requirements for business and director's licenses. These changes aim to reduce administrative barriers and shorten processing times.

On January 1, 2024, the Government of Aruba established the Aruba Fair Trade Authority (AFTA), an independent competition authority promoting fair competition. AFTA monitors business practices to ensure that competition is not hindered and that no company abuses its dominant position. By fostering a competitive market, AFTA creates a level playing field, improves the investment climate, and offers new business opportunities by removing entry barriers, ultimately boosting economic growth and prosperity in Aruba. AFTA's core task is to enforce the Competition Ordinance (Mededingingsverordening) (AB [Official Bulletin] 2020 No. 103), using investigative and enforcement powers. It also advises the government on the competitive impact of existing and proposed regulations. The new Competition Regulation rules took effect on January 1, 2024.

A different key amendment took effect on January 1, 2023, with the revision of the Commercial Register Ordinance, which now mandates that enterprises, partnerships, legal entities, and trusts must register their ultimate beneficiaries in the Ultimate Beneficial Owner (UBO) register at the Chamber of Commerce. The UBO refers to the ultimate beneficiaries of an organization, and this register, managed by the Chamber of Commerce, also the holder of the Trade Register, includes the UBOs of all enterprises, partnerships, legal entities, and trusts.

A further opportunity is that Aruba introduced a Supportive Policy Framework – Fiscal Incentive Measures, effective 1 January 2026, to accelerate entrepreneurship and economic diversification. These measures are elaborated further in Sections 3.2.3.

## Recommendations

### A. Steps to be taken by the government

#### 1. Streamlining government processes

- **Information sharing**
  - Amend the law to grant the CoC the authority to dissolve inactive businesses.
  - Synchronize the cleanup of the CoC database with CBS Census data and DEACI database.
- **Data collection**

- Facilitate collaboration between CBS and the CoC to gather data on business startups, closures, and survival rates.
- **Management and periodic reporting**
  - Explore the use of sample-based annual business surveys by CBS and the Central Bank of Aruba (CBA) to replace traditional censuses (e.g., Business Census 2014), enabling faster, more cost-effective publication of SME data.

## 2. Incentives for SMEs

- Simplify the tax system specifically for SMEs.
- Encourage the creation of subsidy schemes for SMEs and necessary infrastructure to develop new economic sectors, especially those based on emerging technologies.
- Introduce incentives such as subsidies, tax benefits or other incentive instruments such as:
  - Self-employed deductions
  - Incentives to support young entrepreneurs starting small businesses
  - Tax benefits for startups in their first two years to stimulate growth and development

## 3. Legislative simplification and regulatory impact

- Simplify and communicate statutory and tax reporting requirements for SMEs.
- Streamline business start-up and closure processes.
- Implement legal reforms to support the development of e-commerce.
- Assess existing legislation to determine its impact on SME-friendliness.

## B. Steps to be taken by stakeholders

- Introduce a *Trade Name Law (Handelsnaam)* for businesses.
- Ensure the CoC actively dissolves inactive businesses in its registry.
- Require the CoC to gather data on business start-ups, closures, and survival rates.
- Establish a quick scan process and accelerate due diligence procedures for opening business bank accounts.

### 3.2.3. Supportive Policy Framework – Fiscal Incentive Measures

#### **Favorable Fiscal Incentive Framework for SMEs in Designated Economic Development Areas**

With effect from 1 January 2026, Aruba has implemented a set of fiscal incentives aimed at promoting investment in renovation, housing development, and the adaptive reuse of buildings in Oranjestad and San Nicolas. The incentive framework provides targeted relief in the areas of corporate income tax, dividend tax, transfer tax, business turnover tax (BBO), and the AZV earmarked levy, with the objective of encouraging both local and foreign investors to redevelop outdated real estate. These measures do not apply to multinational enterprises subject to Pillar Two (Global Minimum Tax), which requires a minimum effective corporate income tax rate of 15%.

The incentive scheme reflects a robust and transparent approach adopted by the AVP–FUTURO Cabinet, designed to be administratively feasible for both investors and the Department of Taxes (*Departamento di Impuesto*). The framework was introduced as

“begunstigend beleid,” i.e., as favorable policy applied in anticipation of formal legislation, enabling faster rollout and early impact. It introduces temporary tax exemptions, consisting of a ten-year exemption from corporate income tax and dividend tax, and a two-year exemption from transfer tax and BBO. The exemptions apply solely to income, distributions, and transactions directly linked to the redevelopment of real estate located within designated areas of *Oranjestad* and *San Nicolas*. For 2026–2027, the two-year relief also covers (i) transfer tax relief not only on the acquisition of real estate, but also on the acquisition of shares in a qualifying entity, and (ii) exemptions from BBO and the AZV earmarked levy on the delivery/transfer of the property to the qualifying entity, where applicable.

In addition, a book-value roll-over (“doorschuiffaciliteit”) is available in 2026–2027 to facilitate moving the redevelopment property (and related debts) into a new qualifying company structure, reducing friction for restructuring and project initiation.

Corporate taxpayers that do not qualify for the exemptions may instead benefit from accelerated depreciation of eligible redevelopment costs. More specifically, the framework provides for “willekeurige afschrijving” (discretionary accelerated depreciation) on qualifying renovation/redevelopment costs up to Afl. 500,000 (within the applicable period), creating an alternative pathway for investors and SMEs that do not meet the full exemption conditions.

The Government should focus on effective implementation, SME accessibility, inter-agency coordination, and ongoing monitoring of the fiscal incentive framework to maximize its impact on entrepreneurship, urban redevelopment, and sustainable economic growth in Oranjestad and San Nicolas.

### **The start-up tax incentive within the corporate income tax framework**

In order to stimulate entrepreneurship and support the growth of start-up companies, the government has decided to introduce a specific Start-up Scheme within the corporate income tax framework. The objective of this Start-up Scheme is to strengthen entrepreneurship and the innovative capacity of newly established companies, specifically within the promising sectors.

Start-up companies are often confronted in their initial phase with high start-up costs, limited liquidity, and increased entrepreneurial risk. The targeted fiscal facilities provided during the first five years following incorporation offer relief from financial burdens. Through this approach, investments, innovation, and the development of necessary skills are actively encouraged, enabling new enterprises to build a solid foundation and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

The scheme applies exclusively to start-up companies that are incorporated and established in Aruba on or after 1 January 2026, that are subject to corporate income tax pursuant to Article 15, paragraph 2, of the National Ordinance on Corporate Income Tax.

In addition to the general relief during the first five years, the Start-up Scheme includes concrete instruments that strengthen its growth impact, including an annual profit-tax exemption of Afl. 50,000 (within the scheme period), an investment allowance increased from 10% to 20% for qualifying investments (first five years), and a partial deduction of new business loan principal (50% of principal, up to Afl. 30,000 per year), helping reduce financing pressure in the start-up phase.

The scheme also encourages reinvestment by requiring start-ups to invest at least 15% of gross turnover in qualifying growth areas (e.g., business assets/ICT, staff

development/training, and improvements to business space), reinforcing innovation and capability-building.

Finally, the scheme contains a BBO-related facilitation component during the scheme period, which can further reduce early operational costs when properly applied. From an “opportunity” perspective, the formal onboarding requirements (e.g., timely registrations and notification) create a clear pathway that can be streamlined into a standardized start-up onboarding process (e.g., via a one-stop channel), lowering barriers and reducing uncertainty for new firms.

Effective implementation of the Start-up Scheme requires active engagement by entrepreneurs, business support organizations, financial institutions, professional advisors, and educational institutions to reduce start-up risks and strengthen innovation-driven growth.

### **Modernizing the Fiscal Treatment of Fringe Benefits**

The modernization of the fiscal treatment of fringe benefits presents a significant opportunity to strengthen Aruba’s entrepreneurial ecosystem by enabling employers, especially SMEs, to offer more competitive and flexible employment packages.

Updated fiscal facilities support workforce mobility, employee well-being, skills development, and international talent attraction, helping businesses respond to evolving labor market needs. By aligning fringe benefit policies with modern employment practices, Aruba can enhance productivity, attract skilled professionals, and improve business competitiveness, thereby fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic growth. The revised framework also modernizes the expatriate-related facilities (including timing and duration conditions), strengthening Aruba’s ability to attract and retain internationally mobile talent, an important enabler for SMEs in promising and knowledge-based sectors.

To maximize the impact of the amended Fringe Benefits Regulation, the Government should prioritize clear guidance, administrative readiness, SME-friendly implementation, alignment with talent strategies, and continuous monitoring and stakeholder engagement. Successful modernization of the fiscal treatment of fringe benefits requires active engagement by employers, HR professionals, advisors, payroll providers, business associations, educational institutions, and employees to ensure effective implementation, compliance, and positive labor market outcomes.

### **Designation of Permitted Service Activities within the Free Zones**

The designation and modernization of permitted service activities within Aruba’s free zones present a significant opportunity for SMEs to participate in internationally oriented, service-based economic activities. By providing clear and up-to-date guidance on eligible service activities-particularly in areas such as digital services, professional services, logistics support, and knowledge-based industries-the free zone regime can offer SMEs a predictable and attractive framework for growth. This clarity reduces uncertainty, lowers barriers to entry, and enables small and medium-sized enterprises to develop export-oriented services, attract international clients, and integrate into global value chains. As a result, SMEs are better positioned to innovate, scale their operations, and contribute to a more diversified and resilient economy, while benefiting from Aruba’s competitive advantages as an international business location.

Important scope clarification from the 2026 “positive list”: service activities are not permitted if they result in intellectual property rights (IPR) being created that become part of the Free Zone company’s assets; this boundary is relevant for knowledge-based and creative/digital SMEs

and should be communicated clearly to prevent misalignment and support compliant business-model design. To fully realize the opportunity presented by expanded service activities in the free zones, the Government should focus on clarity, modernization, SME accessibility, institutional coordination, proactive promotion, and continuous monitoring.

## **Recommendations**

### **A. Steps to be taken by the government**

#### **1. Clarity, legal certainty, and guidance**

- Publish clear eligibility criteria, qualifying activities, procedures, and timelines.
- Provide practical SME-oriented guidance (checklists, examples, FAQs, interpretation notes).
- Ensure consistent interpretation across all relevant public bodies.

#### **2. SME-friendly access and streamlined administration**

- Design simplified, proportionate processes for SMEs and early-stage firms.
- Reduce compliance burden with standardized templates and digital tools.

#### **3. Awareness, outreach, and ecosystem mobilization**

- Run targeted communication campaigns and practical briefings.
- Use partners (support desks, chambers, sector bodies, education providers) to promote and guide users.

#### **4. Policy alignment and complementary support**

- Align measures with promising sectors, workforce/talent strategy, sustainability, and export diversification.
- Complement fiscal measures with non-fiscal support (mentoring, training, business services), especially for start-ups and SMEs.

#### **5. One-stop coordination (urban redevelopment focus)**

- For Oranjestad/San Nicolas redevelopment incentives, establish a one-stop coordination mechanism linking permits, taxation, and support services.

### **B. Steps to be taken by Stakeholders**

#### **1. Dissemination, guidance, and feedback loops**

- ATB, associations, and support organizations disseminate information, provide guidance, and channel feedback to government.

#### **2. Skills and workforce alignment**

- Training providers align programs to the skills needs created by redevelopment, entrepreneurship, digital/service exports, and HR/payroll implementation.

### 3. Operational coordination

- Relevant agencies and semi-public bodies coordinate closely with stakeholders to ensure consistent interpretation and smooth execution.

#### 3.2.4. Operational environment when starting a business

Aruba has significantly untapped business potential in terms of time, money, ideas, and innovation. However, this potential is not being fully utilized, leading to suboptimal resource allocation and a lower GDP than achievable. Businesses must interact with numerous government agencies, each with their own set of requirements, compliance, information, forms, and payments, leading to inefficiency and delays. This is especially burdensome for new businesses, as processes are not coordinated and often do not run in parallel.

The government's goal is to reduce the time and effort entrepreneurs spend on starting a business. To achieve this, DEACI has updated the Business Establishment Policy to simplify eligibility conditions, make the process more customer-friendly, and move it to a fully digital platform. This allows businesses to receive their licenses more quickly, as they can apply for a business license 24/7. Additionally, the promising sector framework has been included in the exemption criteria for Business and Directors' licenses, aiming to encourage foreign direct investment (FDI) in key areas of the promising sectors, in the Oranjestad city center, and downtown San Nicolas.

However, a key challenge remains as there is no single governmental body that offers a coordinated approach to support businesses. Currently, businesses often need to build or lease premises, and set up equipment, before they can begin operations, as everything must be checked and approved before the final license is granted. These steps are not synchronized, requiring businesses to wait for approval before proceeding to the next phase. This sequential process can take months, during which businesses are forced to invest money without generating any revenue, thereby increasing the investment risk. The planned One-Stop Shop can also serve as the primary access point for entrepreneurs to understand and navigate the fiscal and regulatory instruments effective 1 January 2026. In particular, clear step-by-step guidance is needed for the Start-up Scheme for promising sectors and for redevelopment-related incentives in Oranjestad and San Nicolas. Without a centralized information and advisory function, eligible entrepreneurs may miss deadlines, misunderstand eligibility conditions, or avoid using the measures due to perceived complexity, reducing policy effectiveness.

The solution is to establish a unified system within the government, such as a One-Stop Shop, where businesses only interact with a single point of contact. This would streamline the process and reduce delays. To improve the operational environment for new businesses, the following recommendations are proposed.

### Recommendations

#### A. Steps to be taken by the government

##### 1. Streamlining licensing and administrative procedures

- Align licensing processes so that new businesses can complete all formalities through a single administrative body, reducing bureaucratic delays.

- Leverage the eGovernment initiative to digitize and integrate administrative functions into a unified 'One-Stop Shop' system.

## **2. Online registration and payment infrastructure**

- Enable full online completion of registration and payment processes (e.g., through digital application forms).
- Introduce identification systems such as the *Burgerservicenummer* or *Rechtspersonen-Samenwerkingsverbanden Informatienummer*, similar to models used in the Netherlands, as referenced in the eGovernment project.
- Ensure the necessary digital infrastructure and platforms are in place to support these services.

### **B. Steps to be taken by stakeholders**

- Improve accessibility and efficiency of online payment systems to support smooth virtual transactions.
- Introduce a flat fee structure through the CoC to simplify cost expectations for new businesses.

#### **3.2.5. Support services for SMEs and startups**

Public and private agencies have been actively supporting local SMEs and startups by building the in-house capacity of businesses. Different entities as mentioned before offer a variety of workshops and courses throughout the year, covering different business-related topics, and providing ongoing support and information to interested parties. A comprehensive list of all programs and achievements to date is provided in Chapter 4. However, there is always room for continuous improvement, which is why the following recommendations are proposed.

### **Recommendations**

#### **A. Steps to be taken by the government**

##### **1. Improve access to business services and government support**

- Partner with accredited training institutions to deliver more specialized services to SMEs, in line with the triple helix model (government, academia, and industry collaboration).
- Monitor and assess the specific needs of SMEs to ensure alignment with the offerings and activities of business support services.

#### **B. Steps to be taken by stakeholders**

- Support the accreditation of service providers and their training programs to ensure quality and relevance.
- Provide standardized training for SMEs to enhance product and service quality, and to strengthen management, operational, and quality standards.

### **3.2.6. Access to credit and financing mechanisms**

The government has welcomed Qredits to Aruba to support underserved SMEs by offering a variety of financial products. One of these is a business credit or company loan, with a maximum amount of AWG 200,000 and an average duration of 5 years. Entrepreneurs repay the loan through fixed monthly amounts, covering both repayment and interest. The repayment period can be adjusted based on consultation with a business advisor.

Qredits also offers microcredit for both starting and existing entrepreneurs. New entrepreneurs can access up to AWG 100,000, while established SMEs can borrow up to AWG 200,000. The loan is offered with a 9.95% interest rate, a fixed monthly repayment, and a processing fee ranging from AWG 500 to AWG 3,000, depending on the loan amount. The loan duration is typically 5 years.

For agricultural entrepreneurs, Qredits provides an Agri-loan. In collaboration with the government (the Ministry of Economic Affairs), this loan offers a reduced interest rate to stimulate agriculture. Entrepreneurs can borrow up to AWG 200,000 for various business needs, with a 5-year term and a 6-month grace period. The interest rate for this loan is 2%, and it includes a processing fee like microcredit. Repayment is made through fixed monthly installments. Qredits also provides business loans for entrepreneurs seeking to finance investments or purchase business space. With a loan amount of up to AWG 200,000 and a duration of 1 to 10 years, entrepreneurs can manage their repayments with fixed monthly amounts for interest and principal. The interest rate for this loan is 9.95%, with a processing fee ranging from AWG 500 to AWG 3,000, depending on the loan amount.

Additionally, the government is currently collaborating with Qredits to establish a Creative Fund aimed at supporting the creative industry. This initiative seeks to provide financial assistance to entrepreneurs in the creative sector, helping them access the necessary funding to grow and develop their businesses. By working together, the government and Qredits aim to foster innovation and creativity, ensuring that the creative industry has the resources it needs to thrive and contribute to the broader economic landscape.

Lastly, in 2026, local businesses will be able to apply for the BMKB through RVO. The BMKB is particularly beneficial for entrepreneurs who may lack sufficient collateral to secure a loan. By utilizing this scheme, businesses can increase their collateral, improving their ability to obtain financing. Additionally, to enhance financing options for sustainability investments, the BMKB has been expanded to include a green section, known as BMKB-G (Green SME Credit Guarantee Scheme). This new section is specifically aimed at supporting SMEs seeking to invest in sustainable projects, further promoting environmental and economic sustainability.

## **Recommendations**

### **A. Steps to be taken by the government**

#### **1. Expand access to credit and financing options**

- Collaborate with Qredits to stimulate the availability of credit, especially for innovation-driven SMEs.
- Explore Public-Private Partnership (PPP) funding as an alternative financing method for the development of SME-oriented programs and projects.

## 2. Promote alternative financing models

- Encourage the growth of venture capital, crowdfunding, angel investment, and other financing mechanisms (e.g., guarantee schemes) to facilitate foreign capital inflow for local investments.

### B. Steps to be taken by stakeholders

- Improve local online payment systems to facilitate efficient and secure e-commerce transactions for SMEs.

#### 3.2.7. *Support for priority economic sectors*

This Policy supports entrepreneurship in Aruba's priority sectors. Each sector, ranging from agriculture and renewable energy to FinTech and the Orange Economy, offers unique opportunities for SMEs to drive innovation, sustainability, and inclusive growth.

- The RdA terrain is one such site with untapped potential. With its deep-sea access and large-scale logistical infrastructure, the area presents strategic opportunities for redevelopment. Discussions are underway to transform it into a zone for innovation-focused enterprises in renewable energy, maritime logistics, and digital infrastructure.
- The government has already launched key initiatives aimed at modernizing the agricultural sector, such as the studies conducted by Priva and the planned establishment of the Agri-Innovation Park. These initiatives are opening the door to tech-enabled agriculture (AgTech), creating new entrepreneurial opportunities in an increasingly vital sector for food security and sustainability.
- The FinTech sector is being positioned as a future growth driver. The creation of a National FinTech Strategy could provide regulatory clarity and foster innovation, creating a supportive environment for digital entrepreneurs.
- The creative industries sector is gaining momentum through increased institutional support. SMEs now benefit from programs supported by IDEA, ARINA, and Exprodesk. These developments will help creative entrepreneurs move from informal activity to formal enterprise.
- In the housing sector, there is growing momentum to promote both social housing and affordable housing, particularly for young professionals and seniors, which could create entrepreneurial opportunities in sustainable construction, smart community development, and housing renovation services. These efforts not only address housing shortages but also stimulate local economic activity.
- Aruba's renewable energy transition could generate demand for SMEs engaged in solar panel distribution, installation, maintenance, and energy efficiency solutions.

The government recognizes the pivotal role of startups and out-of-the-box thinkers in driving this transformation. Aruba is well-positioned to foster innovation thanks to its robust technological and physical infrastructure. The island boasts a reliable and expansive internet network, with 97.2% of the population having access to the internet, one of the fastest broadband speeds across 28 Caribbean islands, according to Ookla. These digital advantages support the emergence of digitally enabled and sustainable industries.

A key enabler of innovation is the protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), including patents, trademarks, and trade secrets. IPR is especially relevant for the creative industries, which are vital to building a knowledge-based society. Unfortunately, IPR remains

underutilized. Promoting understanding and enforcement of IPR will enhance Aruba's reputation as a hub for innovative and sustainable entrepreneurship.

By leveraging these sector-specific opportunities and supporting SMEs with targeted policy tools, Aruba can position itself as a dynamic, innovation-driven economy that offers inclusive growth and global competitiveness.

## Recommendations

### A. Steps to be taken by the government

#### 1. Stimulate Urban Entrepreneurship in Oranjestad

- Provide rental subsidies for students and young professionals.
- Offer (fiscal) incentives for mixed-use building renovations.
- Enhance safety and placemaking to attract startups and small businesses.

#### 2. Revitalize San Nicolas as the Creative City

- Advance Phase 1 of the revitalization plan (e.g., Farmers' Market, public spaces).
- Support creative and cultural SMEs through events and targeted incentives.
- Launch flagship projects to stimulate local entrepreneurship.

#### 3. Develop the RDA Terrain

- Create a Master Plan focused on renewable energy, logistics, and digital infrastructure.
- Invest in enabling infrastructure to support SME activity.
- Coordinate long-term planning with public-private partners.

#### 4. Boost Agri-preneurship

- Enhance collaboration with regional partners, specifically within the framework of the DCALFA.
- Promote SME development in commercial agriculture (e.g., Agri-Innovation Park).

#### 5. Advance FinTech and Digital Innovation

- Develop a FinTech Policy & Strategy.
- Amend and/or improve legislation to stimulate the development of the FinTech sector.
- Support startups with funding, co-working spaces, and digital infrastructure.
- Align education with skills in FinTech, AI, and blockchain.

#### 6. Strengthen the Creative Industries (Orange Economy)

- Implement an Orange Economy Policy & Strategy and Creative Fund.
- Provide targeted support: grants, mentoring, networking.
- Expand initiatives like the Creative Business Academy and arts education.

### B. Steps to be taken by stakeholders

- Monitor the implementation of key initiatives and evaluate progress against timelines to ensure accountability. This could be coordinated through the Aruba Trade Board or other designated platforms.

- Collaborate with government entities to provide feedback on sector-specific policies, ensuring they reflect market needs and are SME-friendly.
- Support awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building initiatives by engaging sectoral networks.
- Facilitate public-private dialogue and partnerships to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem and help connect SMEs with mentors, investors, and new markets.
- Promote and co-develop training programs, incubators, and technical support services for SMEs aligned with the needs of priority sectors.

### 3.2.8. *Internationalization of SMEs*

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face unique challenges when it comes to internationalizing their operations, largely due to limitations in resources and expertise, particularly in utilizing information and communication technology (ICT) to its full potential. In a globalized economy, these challenges can become barriers to growth, preventing SMEs from accessing broader markets and fully capitalizing on new opportunities. However, the government can play a pivotal role in helping SMEs overcome these obstacles, turning potential threats into growth opportunities by providing the right support and resources.

To facilitate the internationalization of SMEs, the government established Exprodesk in 2017 as an export promotion desk. Exprodesk, a unit within the Division of Foreign Economic Relations and Business Development at DEACI, offers SMEs the opportunity to effectively expand their services or products into international markets. By providing critical information, support, and resources, Exprodesk helps businesses navigate the complexities of export and international trade. However, for Exprodesk to carry out its mission effectively, it must be adequately resourced and supported to ensure that SMEs receive the guidance they need to succeed in global markets. In addition to Exprodesk, the government collaborates with other key organizations such as the CoC, ATIA, and the FZA to provide complementary services and resources to help SMEs do business abroad. These organizations offer valuable information, guidance, and networking opportunities to help businesses enter new markets, thereby contributing to the growth of exports and international business operations.

Furthermore, the rise of e-commerce plays a significant role in the internationalization of SMEs. By adopting e-commerce platforms, SMEs can expand their reach beyond local borders, accessing international customers and markets with relative ease. E-commerce not only supports international expansion but also enables SMEs to achieve operational excellence by streamlining processes, reducing overhead costs, and improving customer service. Ultimately, the use of e-commerce platforms can lead to improved financial performance for SMEs, helping them compete in a global marketplace. It is therefore crucial for SMEs in Aruba to embrace e-commerce as a tool for internationalization and growth.

## Recommendations

### A. Steps to be taken by the government

#### 1. Strengthen the role of Exprodesk

- Continue Exprodesk's support for SME internationalization through services such as:
  - Export training and coaching
  - Technical assistance and capacity building

- Guidance on regulatory compliance, international trade agreements, finance, logistics, customs, packaging, and pricing

## **2. Approval of the Export Policy**

- Approve the national Export Policy with clear goals and strategies to support SME internationalization.

## **3. Support the Aruba Trade Board**

- Support ongoing collaboration between the Board, DEACI, and other stakeholders to build a competitive export ecosystem.

## **4. Continue comprehensive export training programs**

- Maintain and expand workshops and seminars on:
  - Trade regulations, finance, logistics, pricing, and packaging
  - Global market dynamics and cultural business practices
  - Digital tools for international marketing
- Offer hands-on training and expert consultations to improve SME export readiness.

## **B. Steps to be taken by stakeholders**

- Facilitate export financing through platforms like Qredits or similar institutions to support SMEs entering international markets.

### 3.3 The Ideal Scenario

In this segment, the ideal situation is described with respect to the Entrepreneurs Policy. It is a theoretical concept, as if a country could start from scratch. While it is not practical to immediately achieve this ideal, it provides a useful framework for countries developing an Entrepreneurs Policy. Setting this horizon allows governments to envision the optimal scenario and consider steps towards its realization. Although there will be challenges in practice, keeping this goal in mind is beneficial. The ideal scenario could be as follows:

- *Data collection and publication:* Data on enterprises should be collected and published by size class at least annually, accompanied by ongoing independent research focused on business issues, categorized by enterprise size.
- *Coordination across ministries:* DEACI should coordinate efforts across all ministries that address business-related matters, ensuring a cohesive approach to policy development.
- *Policy based on market and government failures:* SME policies should address identified market or government failures, with a balanced approach that avoids overcomplicating measures given the economy's size and the scale of the issue.
- *Inclusive laws and regulations:* Laws and regulations should be designed to be applicable to all businesses, with specific exemptions or provisions for businesses of varying sizes. In mature SME policy environments, such as in the Netherlands, most regulations now inherently consider SMEs' characteristics, reflecting a “think small first” mentality across ministries.
- *Implementation and evaluation plans:* Each law or regulation should have a clear implementation plan, including a target business population, measurable objectives, monitoring systems, annual budgets, and a long-term evaluation framework. A “sunset provision” should ensure that laws expire after a set period unless evaluated positively for continuation.
- *Monitoring and evaluation:* Ongoing monitoring is essential to assess policy effectiveness, including business adoption, practical challenges, budget usage, and necessary adaptations. If evaluations are not conducted, the efficient use of taxpayers' money cannot be assured. Proper evaluations should lead to conclusions that inform decisions to either continue, modify, or discontinue policies.
- *Unique business identification number:* A unique business number should be issued to each enterprise, used by various government entities such as the Chamber of Commerce, tax office, customs, social security office, and ministries. This would streamline data sharing across agencies, reducing redundancy for entrepreneurs who no longer need to input the same information repeatedly.
- *International business support network:* An effective network of international business support services should be active in key markets, supported by public servants stationed in strategic locations. This network would enhance Aruba's global business connections and facilitate SMEs' internationally.

This long-term vision is in harmony with the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*, which articulates the government's aspiration to modernize public services, strengthen institutional coordination, and support a data-driven, innovation-led economy. The ideal scenario outlined here complements the commitment of the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025-2028* commitment to creating a resilient, efficient, and inclusive business environment.

## 3.4 SME Policy Framework

### Key areas for SME development and policy recommendations for the government and other stakeholders

SME Policy Areas	Recommendations and Actions										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Education and training for SMEs as well as educational alignment to the labor market</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Entrepreneurs' education and training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue collaboration between DEACI and accredited training institutions to provide standard and vocational training for employers.</li> <li>● Develop programs and activities that address local SME needs through cooperation with support service desks.</li> <li>● Modernize the education system, integrate 21st-century skills, and prepare students for future economic opportunities, particularly in areas such as FinTech, digital commerce, and innovation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Employees' education and training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote and organize training under Adult Education Programs in partnership with relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>● Focus on continuous skills enhancement in response to evolving market demands and technological developments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Education alignment to labor market</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Initiate partnerships through DEACI to better align education with labor market needs.</li> <li>● Update vocational curricula (EPE) to reflect shifting employer and sector demands.</li> </ul>										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Institutional and regulatory framework</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Institutional framework for SME policy development</b></p> <p><i>Definition:</i> The criteria for the SME definition will be based on the full-year equivalent employees* of less than 50:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="552 1205 1082 1505"> <thead> <tr> <th>Enterprises</th> <th>Employees*</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Micro</td> <td>0-2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Small</td> <td>3-9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>10-49</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Large</td> <td>50 and above</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>*This basic criterion will be reviewed on a periodic basis to account for: relevant international and local trends, national development priorities and availability of new data.</i></p> <p><b>Streamlining of government processes:</b></p> <p><b>Information sharing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Amend the law to grant the CoC the authority to dissolve inactive businesses.</li> <li>● Synchronize the cleanup of the CoC database with CBS Census data and DEACI database.</li> </ul> <p><b>Data collection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Facilitate collaboration between CBS and the CoC to gather data on business startups, closures, and survival rates.</li> </ul>	Enterprises	Employees*	Micro	0-2	Small	3-9	Medium	10-49	Large	50 and above
Enterprises	Employees*										
Micro	0-2										
Small	3-9										
Medium	10-49										
Large	50 and above										

	<p><b>Management and periodic reporting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the use of sample-based annual business surveys by CBS and the Central Bank of Aruba (CBA) to replace traditional censuses (e.g., Business Census 2014), enabling faster, more cost-effective publication of SME data.</li> </ul> <p><b>Incentives for SMEs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplify the tax system specifically for SMEs.</li> <li>Encourage the creation of subsidy schemes for SMEs and necessary infrastructure to develop new economic sectors, especially those based on emerging technologies.</li> <li>Introduce incentives such as subsidies, tax benefits or other incentive instruments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-employed deductions</li> <li>Incentives to support young entrepreneurs starting small businesses</li> <li>Tax benefits for startups in their first two years to stimulate growth and development</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Legislative simplification and regulatory impact assessment of business procedures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplify and communicate statutory and tax reporting requirements for SMEs.</li> <li>Streamline business start-up and closure processes.</li> <li>Implement legal reforms to support the development of e-commerce.</li> <li>Assess existing legislation to determine its impact on SME-friendliness.</li> </ul>																																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Operational environment when starting a business</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Current Situation</b></p> <p><b>Business registration at Chamber of Commerce:</b></p> <p><i>Time:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 day for registering a corporation of a local or non-local entrepreneur.</li> <li>Likewise, it takes 1 day to register as the sole proprietor of a local or non-local entrepreneur.</li> </ul> <p><i>Costs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs depend on the capital of a non-local sole proprietor for a business registration certificate.</li> </ul> <table border="1" data-bbox="550 1444 1396 1848"> <thead> <tr> <th>Capital (in Aruban Florin)</th> <th>First Registration</th> <th>Annual Fee</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0 - 25,000</td> <td>96</td> <td>96</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25,001 - 50,000</td> <td>120</td> <td>120</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50,001 - 100,000</td> <td>165</td> <td>156</td> </tr> <tr> <td>100,001 - 200,000</td> <td>210</td> <td>175</td> </tr> <tr> <td>200,001 - 500,000</td> <td>350</td> <td>245</td> </tr> <tr> <td>500,001 - 1,000,000</td> <td>700</td> <td>280</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1,000,001 - 2,000,000</td> <td>1,500</td> <td>600</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2,000,001 - 3,000,000</td> <td>1,500</td> <td>750</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3,000,001 - 4,000,000</td> <td>1,500</td> <td>900</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4,000,001 - 5,000,000</td> <td>1,500</td> <td>1,125</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5,000,001 and more</td> <td>1,500</td> <td>1,275</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Capital (in Aruban Florin)	First Registration	Annual Fee	0 - 25,000	96	96	25,001 - 50,000	120	120	50,001 - 100,000	165	156	100,001 - 200,000	210	175	200,001 - 500,000	350	245	500,001 - 1,000,000	700	280	1,000,001 - 2,000,000	1,500	600	2,000,001 - 3,000,000	1,500	750	3,000,001 - 4,000,000	1,500	900	4,000,001 - 5,000,000	1,500	1,125	5,000,001 and more	1,500	1,275
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	<p><b>Business licensing:</b></p> <p><i>Time:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce time from an average of 4 weeks to 2 weeks to obtain a business license for a local entrepreneur.</li> </ul> <p><i>Costs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AWG. 400 for local businesses.</li> </ul> <p><b>Director’s licensing:</b></p> <p><i>Time:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce time from 4 weeks to 2 weeks to obtain a director’s license.</li> </ul> <p><i>Costs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AWG. 400 for local businesses.</li> </ul> <p><b>Streamlining licensing and administrative procedures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align licensing processes so that new businesses can complete all formalities through a single administrative body, reducing bureaucratic delays.</li> <li>• Leverage the eGovernment initiative to digitize and integrate administrative functions into a unified ‘One-Stop Shop’ system.</li> </ul> <p><b>Online registration and payment infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable full online completion of registration and payment processes (e.g., through digital application forms).</li> <li>• Introduce identification systems such as the <i>Burgerservicenummer</i> or <i>Rechtspersonen- en Samenwerkingsverbanden Informatienummer</i>, similar to models used in the Netherlands, as referenced in the eGovernment project.</li> <li>• Ensure the necessary digital infrastructure and platforms are in place to support these services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support services for SMEs and startups</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Improve access to business services and government support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with accredited training institutions to deliver more specialized services to SMEs, in line with the triple helix model (government, academia, and industry collaboration).</li> <li>• Monitor and assess the specific needs of SMEs to ensure alignment with the offerings and activities of business support services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Access to credit/finance</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Expand access to credit and financing options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with Qredits to stimulate the availability of credit, especially for innovation-driven SMEs.</li> <li>• Explore Public-Private Partnership (PPP) funding as an alternative financing method for the development of SME-oriented programs and projects.</li> <li>• BMKB-regeling through RVO</li> </ul> <p><b>Promote alternative financing models</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the growth of venture capital, crowdfunding, angel investment, and other financing mechanisms (e.g., guarantee schemes) to facilitate foreign capital inflow for local investments.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support for priority economic sectors</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Stimulate Urban Entrepreneurship in Oranjestad</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide rental subsidies for students and young professionals.</li> <li>• Offer (fiscal) incentives for mixed-use building renovations.</li> <li>• Enhance safety and placemaking to attract startups and small businesses.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Revitalize San Nicolas as the Creative City</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance Phase 1 of the revitalization plan (e.g., Farmers' Market, public spaces).</li> <li>• Support creative and cultural SMEs through events and targeted incentives.</li> <li>• Launch flagship projects to stimulate local entrepreneurship.</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop the RDA Terrain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Master Plan focused on renewable energy, logistics, and digital infrastructure.</li> <li>• Invest in enabling infrastructure to support SME activity.</li> <li>• Coordinate long-term planning with public-private partners.</li> </ul> <p><b>Boost Agri-preneurship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance collaboration with regional partners, specifically within the framework of the DCALFA.</li> <li>• Promote SME development in commercial agriculture (e.g., Agri-Innovation Park).</li> </ul> <p><b>Advance FinTech and Digital Innovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a FinTech Policy &amp; Strategy.</li> <li>• Amend and/or improve legislation to stimulate the development of the FinTech sector.</li> <li>• Support startups with funding, co-working spaces, and digital infrastructure.</li> <li>• Align education with skills in FinTech, AI, and blockchain.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strengthen the Creative Industries (Orange Economy)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement an Orange Economy Policy &amp; Strategy and Creative Fund.</li> <li>• Provide targeted support: grants, mentoring, networking.</li> <li>• Expand initiatives like the Creative Business Academy and arts education.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Internationalization of SMEs</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengthen the role of Exprodesk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Exprodesk's support for SME internationalization through services such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Export training and coaching</li> <li>○ Technical assistance and capacity building</li> <li>○ Guidance on regulatory compliance, international trade agreements, finance, logistics, customs, packaging, and pricing</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Approval of the Export Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the national Export Policy with clear goals and strategies to support SME internationalization.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support the Aruba Trade Board</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support ongoing collaboration between the Board, DEACI, and other stakeholders to build a competitive export ecosystem.</li> </ul> <p><b>Continue comprehensive export training programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and expand workshops and seminars on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Trade regulations, finance, logistics, pricing, and packaging</li> <li>○ Global market dynamics and cultural business practices</li> <li>○ Digital tools for international marketing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Offer hands-on training and expert consultations to improve SME export readiness.</li> </ul>

## 4. Programs and Achievements

In this chapter, the programs and accomplishments of key institutions supporting entrepreneurship and private sector development in Aruba are outlined: Iniciativa pa Desaroyo di Empresa Arubano (IDEA), Exprodesk, CoC, ATIA, the Aruba Investment Agency (ARINA), and Free Zone Aruba (FZA). Each of these organizations plays a distinct yet complementary role in strengthening Aruba's business ecosystem. Together, these institutions form a vital support network for local entrepreneurs and contribute significantly to Aruba's socio-economic development.

### 4.1 IDEA, Iniciativa pa Desaroyo di Empresa Arubano

IDEA (Iniciativa pa Desaroyo di Empresa Arubano) is Aruba's primary Business Development Center dedicated to empowering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Established to stimulate local entrepreneurship and enhance economic resilience, IDEA provides free guidance and support to both aspiring and established entrepreneurs. By addressing key challenges such as limited business knowledge, access to finance, and regulatory complexity, IDEA plays a crucial role in creating a more inclusive and innovative business environment. Its mission is rooted in sustainable development, aiming to strengthen Aruba's commercial sector by promoting productivity, efficiency, and long-term business success.

With a strategic focus on education, capacity building, and tailored guidance, IDEA offers a wide range of services including business registration support, financing and tax information, marketing advice, and business plan development. Through workshops, courses like 'Empresario Prepara I & II', and themed initiatives such as Women and Youth Entrepreneurship, IDEA cultivates a culture of innovation and continuous learning. It also collaborates with various stakeholders on national events and international webinars to expand entrepreneurial impact. As a trusted partner to the Aruban government and business community, IDEA remains committed to driving SME growth, economic diversification, and a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem across the island.

For a more detailed overview of achievements to date, refer to *Appendix 1*.

### 4.2 Exprodesk

Exprodesk, established on September 11th, 2017, plays a pivotal role in advancing Aruba's economic sustainability and innovation. Its mission is to enhance the export capacity of entrepreneurs, thereby contributing to the country's broader economic goals. The creation of Exprodesk is aligned with the need for a more diversified economy, one that goes beyond traditional industries and embraces new sectors and business models with the potential for international growth.

Exprodesk's strategic objectives focus on promoting trade and international business development. These objectives are designed to strengthen and diversify Aruba's economy by fostering innovation and stimulating growth in emerging export sectors. Through its efforts, Exprodesk aims to make a tangible impact on the local business environment by encouraging the adoption of new business models and helping entrepreneurs expand into global markets.

A key part of Exprodesk's role is to position itself as the central export authority and the primary point of contact for businesses seeking to enter international markets. To this end, Exprodesk provides valuable trade and market intelligence, offering insights into global market trends, regulatory requirements, and export opportunities. By facilitating strategic planning and

coordination between various authorities and stakeholders, Exprodesk ensures that businesses have the support they need to thrive in a global economy.

The services and activities of Exprodesk are comprehensive, covering areas such as market research, export training, regulatory compliance, and assistance in navigating international trade agreements. These services are detailed in Appendix 2, showcasing the broad range of support Exprodesk provides to help SMEs expand their reach and improve their competitiveness on the international stage.

In summary, Exprodesk is a vital resource for Aruban entrepreneurs looking to internationalize their businesses. By promoting trade, fostering innovation, and offering expert guidance, Exprodesk helps to create an environment where SMEs can grow, diversify, and contribute to Aruba's long-term economic success.

For a more detailed overview of Exprodesk's Services and Activities, refer to *Appendix 2*.

### **4.3 Aruba Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

The Aruba Chamber of Commerce and Industry plays a vital role in stimulating and supporting sustainable entrepreneurship, with the overarching goal of fostering long-term socio-economic growth on the island. As the official representative body of trade and industry since 1930, the Chamber is committed to creating favorable conditions for business development by focusing on three key areas: the entrepreneur, the business environment, and innovation. Its vision is to be the primary resource center for the business community in Aruba, while its mission emphasizes the promotion of an attractive investment and entrepreneurial climate through effective company data management, evidence-based guidance, and policy advocacy.

To support entrepreneurs, the Chamber offers a wide range of services, including personal advisory sessions, seminars, development programs, and information campaigns that raise awareness and build capacity. It also advocates for a stronger business environment by advising the Minister of Economic Affairs, both upon request and proactively, and by participating in public-private committees that influence national economic policy. Recognizing the critical role of innovation, the Chamber facilitates opportunities for entrepreneurs to explore new technologies, markets, and ideas through events like trade missions, conferences, and exhibitions, as well as through its communication platforms.

For a more detailed overview of the Events and Programs of the Aruba CoC for SMEs, refer to *Appendix 3*.

### **4.4 ATIA, Aruba Trade and Industry Association**

The Aruba Trade and Industry Association (ATIA) is the leading advocacy organization representing the voice and interests of the Aruban business community. Established in 1945, ATIA is the island's largest employers' organization, directly and indirectly representing over 80% of Aruba's private sector employment through its membership and other sister organizations such as Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) and WAB. As a non-profit organization, ATIA provides high-value services to its members while actively promoting a sustainable and competitive economic environment. It champions the interests of local businesses through strategic partnerships, advocacy, and continuous dialogue with key stakeholders.

As the voice of the private sector, ATIA plays an influential role in various governmental advisory and consultative bodies and holds representation on the boards of several public entities. The organization maintains both formal and informal relationships with the government, political figures, social institutions, and international business associations, ensuring that the perspectives and concerns of the business community are consistently heard and addressed.

ATIA's mission is to represent, promote, and defend the interests of its members, and to work collaboratively with stakeholders to foster Aruba's economic and social well-being. Its efforts are guided by a commitment to strengthening the local business climate and driving sustainable development. In 1964, ATIA introduced its code of ethics, reinforcing its principles of professionalism and integrity in business practices. Over the decades, ATIA has played a pivotal role in shaping Aruba's economic policy landscape and continues to serve as a trusted partner in the island's development.

For a more detailed overview of ATIA's Services and Events, refer to *Appendix 4*.

#### **4.5 ARINA, Aruba Investment Agency**

Established to attract and facilitate strategic investments, the Aruba Investment Agency (ARINA) plays a key role in strengthening and diversifying Aruba's economy. Its core mission is to connect Aruba with global business opportunities by attracting investors, pioneers, capital, knowledge, and innovative technologies across high-potential economic sectors. By focusing on investment promotion and facilitation, ARINA ensures Aruba remains competitive in the global market, positioning the island as an attractive and future-ready destination for investment. In alignment with the Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028, ARINA prioritizes strategic investments in eight key areas: the revitalization of Oranjestad and San Nicolas; the development of the Refineria di Aruba (RDA) terrain; expansion of commercial agriculture; growth of the creative industry; advancement of FinTech; development of sustainable housing; and the transition to renewable energy. These focus areas reflect Aruba's vision for inclusive, resilient, and innovation-driven economic development.

Given ARINA's role in investment facilitation across priority focus areas, ARINA can incorporate the city-center redevelopment fiscal incentives effective 1 January 2026 into its investor toolkit for Oranjestad and San Nicolas. This includes proactively identifying eligible project pipelines, supporting investor matching, and coordinating with permitting and support agencies to reduce execution delays. Integrating these incentives into investment promotion can help convert policy intent into tangible redevelopment projects and expanded space for entrepreneurial activity.

While ARINA was initially established to focus on foreign direct investment, in recent years it has also broadened its scope to support local entrepreneurship, particularly within the creative sector. Through initiatives such as the Orange Economy Symposium, ARINA has helped foster dialogue on the economic potential of the CCI sector and contributed to positioning San Nicolas as a hub for creative entrepreneurship. Additionally, the agency has proposed a government-funded Mentorship & Support Program to provide financial assistance and business guidance to small enterprises in San Nicolas, promoting their growth and enhancing access to capital.

ARINA complements the efforts of SME-focused entities like IDEA and Exprodesk by creating opportunities for local entrepreneurs to engage with foreign investors, government agencies,

and strategic partners. Through policy advocacy, networking events, and investment-driven initiatives, ARINA continues to play a pivotal role in strengthening Aruba's investment climate and supporting long-term economic sustainability through both local and international collaboration.

#### **4.6 Free Zone Aruba (FZA) NV**

Free Zone Aruba (FZA) N.V. plays a pivotal role in fostering the growth and internationalization of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Aruba. As the managing entity of Aruba's designated free zones, FZA provides SMEs with a competitive platform to access global markets through a range of tailored incentives and services.

FZA offers SMEs significant advantages such as tax benefits, a one-stop-shop, and ready-to-use facilities, enabling local entrepreneurs to scale their operations beyond the island's borders. By facilitating a business-friendly environment focused on international trade and export, FZA empowers SMEs to innovate, attract foreign investment, and enhance their operational efficiency. Effective 1 January 2026, the Free Zone regime for service activities has been clarified through a "positive list" of permitted service activities. This strengthens legal certainty by defining which service activities may be conducted from the Free Zone and emphasizes income-generating activities where value is created in Aruba. The framework also explicitly excludes activities that result in the creation of intellectual property rights that become assets of the Free Zone entity, reinforcing substance and value-creation expectations. Clear communication and onboarding support are essential to ensure SMEs can understand eligibility and participate effectively in service-based exports.

Beyond infrastructural and fiscal incentives, FZA actively supports entrepreneurship by providing advisory services, facilitating market linkages, and promoting capacity-building initiatives. Through partnerships with government agencies and private sector stakeholders, FZA contributes to the development of a dynamic SME sector that is resilient, sustainable, and globally competitive.

In the context of the national Entrepreneurs Policy, FZA will continue to be a strategic partner in enabling SMEs to realize their growth potential, thus contributing to economic diversification, job creation, and sustainable development in Aruba.

For a more detailed overview of FZA's Action Plan 2025-2028, refer to *Appendix 5*.

## 5. Action Plan 2025- 2028

The Action Plan 2025–2028 outlines the concrete steps required to implement the Entrepreneurs Policy and is closely aligned with the priorities set out in the *Programa di Gobernacion 2025–2028*. The target is to create a comprehensive, systematic, and highly coordinated entrepreneur development plan that is aligned with market and business necessities. By linking each policy measure to practical implementation, this plan supports the development of a strong, inclusive, and innovative-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem. The intended result is economic growth, along with a sustainable, innovative, and diversified economy for Aruba. The table below outlines the actions planned for 2025–2028, i.e., target year 1-4.

Section	Planned Action	Target Year				Responsible Person(s)/ Department(s)	Evaluation Year			
		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4
<b>A. Education and training for SMEs, along with alignment of educational programs to labor market needs</b>	1. Entrepreneur education and training	X	X	X	X	DEACI CoC EPE DE ATIA	X	X	X	X
	2. Employee education and training	X	X	X	X	EPE DE				X
	3. Education alignment to labor market	X	X	X	X	DEA DEACI CoC EPE DPL ATIA				X
<b>B. Institutional and regulatory framework</b>	4. Streamlining government processes	X	X	X	X	DRH DEACI DIMP DWJZ CoC CBS Douane				X
	5. Incentives for SMEs	X				DIMP CoC DEACI ATIA DWJZ		X		
	6. Legislative simplification and regulatory impact		X	X	X	DWJZ DEACI CoC DIMP Douane				X
<b>C. Supportive Policy Framework – Fiscal Incentive Measures</b>	7. Clarity, legal certainty, and guidance		X	X	X	DWJZ DEACI CoC DIMP Douane				X
	8. SME-friendly access and streamlined administration		X	X	X	DWJZ DEACI CoC DIMP Douane				X
	9. Awareness, outreach, and		X	X	X	DWJZ DEACI CoC				X

	ecosystem mobilization					DIMP Douane					
	10. Policy alignment and complementary support		X	X	X	DWJZ DEACI CoC DIMP Douane					X
	11. One-stop coordination (urban redevelopment focus)		X	X	X	DWJZ DEACI CoC DIMP Douane					X
<b>D. Operational environment when starting a business</b>	12. Streamlining licensing and administrative procedures (One-Stop Shop)		X			DWJZ KPA KBA CoC DEACI CBS				X	
	13. Online registration and payment infrastructure		X			DWJZ KPA KBA CoC DEACI				X	
<b>E. Support services for SMEs and startups</b>	14. Improve access to business services and government support	X	X	X	X	DWJZ DEACI					X
<b>F. Access to credit and financing mechanisms</b>	15. Expand access to credit and financing options		X			DEACI CoC ATIA					X
	16. Promote alternative financing models			X		MinAZ DEACI CoC ATIA CBA					X
<b>G. Support for priority economic sectors</b>	17. Stimulate Urban Entrepreneurship in Oranjestad		X			MinAZ DEACI CoC UA				X	
	18. Revitalize San Nicolas as the Creative City		X			DEACI UA CoC				X	
	19. Develop the RDA Terrain		X			DEACI UA CoC				X	
	20. Boost Agri-preneurship		X			MinAZ DEACI CoC				X	
	21. Advance FinTech and Digital Innovation		X			DEACI					X
	22. Strengthen the Creative Industries (Orange Economy)	X	X	X	X	DEACI				X	X
<b>H. Internationalization of SMEs</b>	23. Strengthen the role of Exprodesk	X	X	X	X	Exprodesk					
	24. Approval of the Export Policy	X				Minister					X

	25. Support the Aruba Trade Board	X	X	X	X	DEACI Exprodesk Douane CoC FZA ARINA ATIA RVO	X	X	X	X
	26. Continue comprehensive export training programs	X	X	X	X	DEACI CoC ATIA FZA	X	X	X	X
<b>I. Evaluation</b>	27. Evaluate the implementation of the Policy	X	X	X	X	ATB				X

# Appendices Review Entrepreneurs Policy 2018 – 2021 (extended to 2024)

## Appendix 1: IDEA’s Programs and Achievements to Date

Iniciativa pa Desaroyo di Empresa Arubano (IDEA)		
Policy	Programs	Achievements to date
Success in expanding the enterprise culture (results of education programs, promotions of enterprise, start up and development support)	<u>Business Education Program</u> “Empresario Prepara 1”	Program for new entrepreneurs and existing entrepreneurs on how to manage their business successfully.  From 2012 until 2021, a total of 111 persons are in possession of this diploma.
	<u>Business Education Program</u> “Empresario Prepara 2”	September 2017, 2019 & 2022: From 2017 until 2022, a total of 45 people is in possession of this diploma.
	<u>IDEA Workshops</u> The IDEA workshops are organized separately from the workshops regarding other Entrepreneurship projects. A workshop may address more than one topic. The total number of workshops is calculated separately from the Entrepreneurship Project workshop series.	A total of 41 workshops were organized from 2012 until 2024:  The workshops are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating your own Business Plan</li> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship &amp; Innovation</li> <li>• 6 Steps to a better Business &amp; Marketing</li> <li>• Small Business Tax</li> <li>• How to protect the value of your business</li> <li>• How to ensure your business and employees properly</li> <li>• Financing tools for better Business Management</li> <li>• Work hard and be nice to people</li> <li>• How to survive when the going gets tough</li> <li>• Internet Marketing</li> <li>• The best way to advertise your Small Business</li> <li>• Disability Awareness</li> <li>• Ted-Ex</li> <li>• Income Tax 2015</li> <li>• Small Business Administration &amp; Income Tax Return</li> <li>• Mindset</li> <li>• Basic on the importance of Trademark</li> <li>• Income Tax-1 2018</li> <li>• Income Tax-2 2018</li> <li>• The power to make a Social Impact in our Business</li> <li>• Income Tax-1 2019</li> <li>• Income Tax-2 2019</li> <li>• What to expect in the Next Normal</li> <li>• Key tips on how to survive a financial crisis in Business</li> <li>• Awareness on Single-Use Plastic Ban for Entrepreneur</li> <li>• How we can adapt to a Circular Economy</li> <li>• Time for Tax 2020</li> <li>• Strategic Entrepreneurship &amp; Innovation</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking Flowers</li> <li>• Tax Time 2021</li> <li>• Income Tax-1 2022</li> <li>• Income Tax-2 2022</li> <li>• Business License 2022</li> <li>• Business License 2023</li> <li>• Team Building I</li> <li>• Team Building II</li> <li>• Time for Taxes 2023</li> <li>• Pricing Strategies for Business Success</li> <li>• Unlocking Entrepreneurial potential with AI and ChatGPT</li> <li>• Building Resilient Brands: Strategic Communication, Public Relations and Sustainable in Action</li> </ul>
	<u>Training IDEA with collaboration of COSME (Funded by EU)</u>	<p>These training courses may include international facilitators who deliver the training. All these training courses were supported by the COSME project, which was funded by the EU. A total of 14 training courses were provided by IDEA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guespitality &amp; Tourism Satellite Account</li> <li>• Standards &amp; Conformity Assessment</li> <li>• SERVSAFE© Food Safety Manager Certification Training</li> <li>• International Trade: Export Development</li> <li>• Business Plan Crash Course for Startups</li> <li>• Developing Brand Awareness for Customer Action</li> <li>• Managing Innovation</li> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Train the Trainers (TOT)</li> <li>• Business Canvas</li> <li>• Innovative Funding</li> <li>• Good Regulatory Practices (GRP) &amp; Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)</li> <li>• Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)</li> <li>• Developing Greenhouse Systems</li> </ul>
	<u>DOW Small Contractors Training</u>	<p>This training was a special request of the Prime Minister of Aruba in 2016. IDEA organized this one-week training program. The facilitators were from the Tax Department, the Social Insurance Bank (SVB), the Department of Labor and Research, ActionCOACH Aruba, DEACI and its unit IDEA. A total of 125 contractors participated in this certification training.</p>
	<u>Agripreneurship Education:</u> Agriculture certification program "From Farmer to Agripreneur"	<p><b>October 2017:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-day workshop and 1 network session</li> <li>• 31 participants (rights on certification)</li> <li>• A total of 14 lectures presented</li> </ul>
	<u>Farmers' Cooperative Society Agriculture</u>	<p><b>March &amp; April 2018:</b> This was a three-day training program for farmers, on joining a Farmers' Cooperative Society. A total of 30 farmers participated in the program.</p>
	<u>Training on Chicken Farming</u>	<p>A total of 10 chicken farms participated in this two-day training.</p>
	<u>Webinars on Agripreneurship</u>	<p><b>Year 2020:</b></p>

		<p>This year due to the pandemic of COVID, we did the presentation virtually on Zoom.</p> <p>The IDEA presented the following webinars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Import Duty Free on Agricultural, Livestock and Fishery products for Entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Aruba's Tax exemption in Agriculture</li> <li>• Guidance in writing a farming in Agriculture Plan</li> <li>• Guidance in writing a farming Business Plan</li> <li>• Organic Farming</li> <li>• Aruba Agricultural Land for Primary Sector</li> </ul>
	<u>Kids Entrepreneurship Program:</u>	<p><b>Year 2018 until 2019:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 Afterschool Care (Traimerdia)</li> <li>• 259 kids participated</li> </ul>
	<u>Kidpreneur\$ With BIG Ideas:</u> Workshops series for kids on entrepreneurship at Afterschool's Care Traimerdia	<p><b>In year 2022 until 2023:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 Afterschool's Care (Traimerdia)</li> <li>• 179 kids participated</li> </ul>
	<u>Kid\$ BIZ Market:</u> Workshop series for kids on entrepreneurship in school vacation	<p><b>Year 2018:</b> One-week of workshop series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 Wworkshops</li> <li>• 32 kids participated</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2019:</b> Two-days of workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 workshops</li> <li>• 31 kids participated</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2022:</b> Four-days of workshop series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 workshops</li> <li>• 28 kids participated</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2024:</b> Three-days of workshop series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 workshops</li> <li>• 28 kids participated</li> </ul>
	<u>Kidpreneur\$ Bazaar:</u> A Christmas market where children can showcase and sell products they created	<p><b>Year 2018:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 kids/youth participation</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2019:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 kids/youth participated</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2022:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 kids/youth participated</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2023:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-days event</li> <li>• 36 kids/youth participated</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2024:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 kids/youth participated</li> </ul>
	<u>Aruba Global Money Week:</u> To stimulate financial education in Aruba, the Central Bank of Aruba, in collaboration with different	<p><b>Year 2019:</b> IDEA together with Qredits, Santa Rosa &amp; FMA, have performed at the station of "Earn" as part of the project. Our station of</p>

	Aruban financial and government institutions, has formed a financial education and cooperation team to launch an Aruban version of "Global Money Week "	<p>"Earn" is called 'Con pa gana placa for di bo cunucu'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 700 kids participated</li> <li>• Ages 9 to 13 yrs</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2020:</b> In 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, we did the presentation virtually on the Facebook Platform in the month of August. IDEA together with Qredits, National Archaeological Museum Aruba and the Aruba CoC did the presentation of Earn Station in the week of August 17-20. The topic of the presentation this year was "Setting up your business using the Business Model Canvas" and it consisted of different subjects. IDEA presented the video of "Kostenstructuur en Inkomstenstromen".</p>
	<p><u>Youth Entrepreneurship Program:</u></p> <p>Presentation of IDEA services and how to design a Business Plan at secondary schools</p>	<p><b>Year 2018, 2019 &amp; 2022:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPE School</li> <li>• EPB San Nicolas</li> <li>• La Salle College</li> <li>• Ceque College</li> <li>• Colegio San Nicolas</li> <li>• 'YES' Event in San Nicolas</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Youthpreneurship Workshop Series:</u></p>	<p><b>Year 2024:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three-days of workshop series</li> <li>• Ages 12-17 yrs</li> <li>• 5 workshops and 2 success stories</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Woman Entrepreneurship Program Presentation</u></p>	<p><b>May &amp; June 2018:</b> To help aspiring women entrepreneurs together with Centro di Desaroyo di Hende Muher (CEDEHM). Part of this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel discussion</li> <li>• Network session</li> <li>• Breakout session</li> <li>• Mini booths</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Woman Entrepreneurship Webinars</u></p>	<p><b>Year 2021:</b> To keep aspiring women entrepreneurs, IDEA did the following webinars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Entrepreneurship &amp; Innovation</li> <li>• From 'Entrepreneur to Entrepreneurship'</li> <li>• Aspiring Women Entrepreneurship</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Silver Entrepreneurship Program (For 60+)</u></p>	<p><b>Year 2019:</b> This project was aimed at the group of retired or soon-to-be retired professionals who are interested in starting their own business.</p>
	<p><u>Silver Entrepreneurship:</u> Workshop Series for retired or soon to be retired professionals</p>	<p>The following topics were presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources to help you become an entrepreneur</li> <li>• The Power to Make a Social Impact in your Business</li> <li>• How to apply for Social Entrepreneurship in your Business</li> <li>• Business legal forms and Inheritance etc.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know more about the Business Licensing procedures and Idea' services, courses and workshops.</li> <li>• Mindset to Healthy Living and Sports.</li> <li>• Amazing Idea to try Right Now: "Real Estate"</li> <li>• Contribution/Payments/Benefits of Social Insurances</li> <li>• Success Story: 'How I apply my hobby in a Business'</li> <li>• Procedure to open an Account and Products &amp; Services offered at RBC Royal Bank</li> <li>• Innovation, Way to the Future</li> <li>• Best Practices of 'Community Works'</li> <li>• From a Farmer to an Agripreneur</li> <li>• It's Time for Taxes</li> <li>• Examples of a Success Story to Inspire You</li> <li>• Promote your Business with 'Digital Marketing'</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2022</b>, the following topics were presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</li> <li>• Business License</li> <li>• Healthy food &amp; sport</li> <li>• Online banking</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Notary information</li> <li>• Small Business Tax</li> <li>• Marketing &amp; business canvas</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Social Entrepreneurship</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Silver Entrepreneurship Special Gathering</u></p>	<p>The event was a breakfast meeting held at the Eden Garden Coffee House in December 2023. A total of 14 silver entrepreneurs participated, engaging in networking, sharing some motivations and exchanging ideas.</p>
	<p><u>Sport Entrepreneurship Program</u></p>	<p><b>Year 2023 until 2024:</b> Our Sport Entrepreneurship initiative, launched on October 30, 2023, has been a dynamic exploration of the intersection between sports and entrepreneurship. We had 18 participants. The project included 9 topics and a total of 18 workshops.</p>
	<p><u>Sport Entrepreneurship Workshop series</u></p>	<p>The topics of the workshop series were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Sport Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Identifying Opportunities in Sport Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Marketing and Sales in Sport Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Financial Planning and Management for Sport Entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Legal and Ethical Issues in Sport Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Sport Innovation and Technology</li> <li>• Leadership and Team Building in Sport Entrepreneurship</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Practices in Sport Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Winning with Sport Tourism</li> </ul>
	<u>Creative Entrepreneurship Program</u>	<p><b>Year 2024:</b> The kick-off of the Creative Entrepreneurship Workshop Series took place on February 21, 2024, at The Hub in San Nicolas, attracting a crowd of approximately 35 participants.</p>
	<u>Creative Entrepreneurship Workshop series</u>	<p>The primary purpose of this workshop series is to introduce entrepreneurship and its essential benefits to the potential business community of San Nicolas (SN).</p> <p>The following topics were presented in this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Creative Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Creative Entrepreneurship with AI</li> <li>• Write Your Business Plan</li> <li>• Creative &amp; Cultural Topics</li> <li>• Market Your Creative Business</li> <li>• CREATE Your Business Structure</li> <li>• Business Registration</li> <li>• Get Your Business License</li> <li>• Protect Your Creative Assets</li> <li>• Sales and Marketing</li> <li>• Tackling the Shadow Economy in Aruba</li> <li>• Employee Insurance</li> <li>• Manage Your Finances</li> <li>• All About Taxes</li> <li>• Team Empowerment</li> <li>• Import/Export/Exemptions</li> <li>• Get Inspired by IDEA's Services</li> <li>• The Power to Make a Social Impact on Your Creative Business (SDGs)</li> </ul>
	<u>Campaign Buy Local: 'Cumpra Local' – Di Nos pa Nos Mes</u>	<p>The inauguration of the campaign took place on November 25, 2020. The goal of this campaign is to create awareness of the local community to buy local products or to make use of local services to stimulate the local market so we can rebuild the economy of Aruba.</p>
	Interview, Video Editing and Social Media Promotion on Facebook Page Cumpra Local	<p><b>Year 2021:</b> IDEA conducted five interviews with the following businesses to create a promotional video clip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mimi's Jewels</li> <li>• Mauchi's Smoothies</li> <li>• Chocoglam Gift &amp; Beyond</li> <li>• Piece of Cake</li> <li>• Chubato Farm</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2022:</b> We organized the Back-to-School campaign. The following businesses participated in the campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amito</li> <li>• Arulaser</li> <li>• De Wit Van Dorp</li> <li>• Dyon Center</li> <li>• Giselle</li> </ul>

		<p><b>Year 2024:</b> My Gallery: Showcasing a variety of Aruban artisans, My Gallery is in the Renaissance Mall.</p>
	<p><u>Collaboration in different Conferences and Events</u></p>	<p><b>Year 2018:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aruba Small Business Event in June with 250 participants</li> <li>• European Social Economy Regional (ESER) Event in September with 114 participants</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2024:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aruba Showcase Event</li> </ul>
	<p>Results of promotions of enterprise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations to different institutions and organizations.</li> <li>• Participation in different conferences such as LaborExpo, Table Talk, e-Seminar and Small Business Events in USA &amp; Aruba.</li> <li>• Communication through press releases, e-mails, websites (idea-aruba.com), and Facebook Page (IDEA-Aruba).</li> <li>• Interview and promotion of our activities through TV (Primera Plana/Telearuba) and radio (Radio Caliente).</li> </ul>
	<p>Results of startup and development support</p>	<p>IDEA has had a total of 531 clients since its starting date in February 2012.</p>
	<p>Information and guidance to startups on different business topics.</p>	<p>The most requested legal entity at IDEA is Sole Proprietorship (Eenmanszaak) and Limited Liability Company (VBA).</p>
	<p>Stable and existing businesses approach IDEA for guidance on how to expand their business and regarding our business education programs.</p>	<p>The percentage of clients requesting information regarding specific legal entity from 2012 to 2024 is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 47.1% of clients requested information about Limited Liability Companies (LLCs)</li> <li>• 11.8% of clients requested information about different entities.</li> <li>• 35.3% requested information about Sole Proprietorship (Eenmanszaak).</li> <li>• 5.9% requested information about Partnership (VOF).</li> </ul>
<p>Success in engaging in the private sector</p>	<p>Partnering with different stakeholders and training institutes to support SMEs with specialized knowledge and skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SME Center IDEA has good business relationships with its stakeholders</li> <li>• IDEA works together with stakeholders on sustainable development in the commercial sector.</li> <li>• IDEA is related to many other institutions, governmental or private for information and their business policies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy Management</b></p>		
<p>The coordination of programs between different government branches</p>	<p>IDEA can offer valuable information to other government departments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matchmaking coordinator in the conference of "Europe Meets America".</li> <li>• Participation in SDGs workshop</li> <li>• Program coordinator in different Small Business Events.</li> <li>• Lead organizer of different Small Business Events.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active in the Workgroup of Good Agricultural Practices for Policy Writing.</li> <li>• Member of the Aruba Trade Board.</li> </ul>
The methods of engagement of the private sector in SME support, for example the establishment of a national and regional network of small business advocacy councils		The engagement was done through several meetings, training, overview discussions and a regional platform (CaribConnect.bidx.net).
<i>Program Development</i>		
Information and guides	IDEA has different kinds of leaflets and/or brochures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handouts of Business Legal Forms.</li> <li>• Handouts of how to calculate pension and health tax.</li> <li>• Handouts of the dos and don'ts when starting a business.</li> <li>• Additional permits are needed for selling food or drinks.</li> <li>• Steps to take when starting a business.</li> <li>• How and where to insure your employees.</li> <li>• Different templates on how to design a business plan.</li> </ul>
Promotional videos, magazines or other media initiatives	Social media TV commercials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDEA's Facebook page is used nowadays.</li> <li>• Press releases through Aruba's news outlets.</li> <li>• Instagram</li> <li>• IDEA used promotional videos on TV and Facebook.</li> </ul>
Training program manuals	Workshops IDEA Business Course 'Empresario Prepara'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops are held in the conference room at the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce and Industry.</li> <li>• The equipment available is beamer, laptop, Wi-Fi connection, digital board, white board and video conference equipment.</li> <li>• Certification and diplomas were awarded.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: Exprodesk's Services and Activities

Exprodesk		
Policy	Services and Activities	Description
<p><b>Success in assisting entrepreneurs with comprehensive export guidance, training, workshops and coaching to stimulate export of their goods and services</b></p>	<p>Information</p>	<p>In today's world, accurate information is crucial for SMEs to operate and compete on a global scale. Exprodesk, serving as the central point of contact for the <i>Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland</i> (RVO), plays a key role in this by providing export services and market information in collaboration with RVO.</p> <p>Exprodesk offers comprehensive support, including guiding potential exporters through the application process for SIB vouchers and DHI subsidies.</p> <p>The range of resources Exprodesk provides includes both digital and non-digital documents such as brochures, guides, and information about upcoming trade missions. Exprodesk also offers detailed trade and market access information through one-on-one sessions. Additionally, Exprodesk grants general information to both local and international organizations, ensuring that businesses are well-equipped to navigate global markets. Exprodesk has provided tailored information and guidance to a total of <b>352 clients</b>.</p>
	<p><b>Lectures and presentations</b></p>	<p>Since 2017, Exprodesk has been organizing a series of presentations for potential exporters, including the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intellectual Property Rights</li> <li>• Royalties</li> <li>• Micro Financing</li> <li>• Online Payment Possibilities</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Workshops for potential exporters</b></p>	<p>Exprodesk offers a comprehensive program of workshops for potential exporters, designed to highlight opportunities, address concerns, and guide them through the initial steps of entering new markets. These workshops are open and free to all local SMEs, providing essential knowledge on becoming an exporter by understanding export processes and international trade requirements.</p> <p>Exprodesk is committed to supporting local companies interested in building their export capabilities. The workshops focus on developing the array of skills necessary for successful exporting.</p> <p>Since 2017, Exprodesk has conducted the following workshops, among others: Music Workshops, including theoretical concepts and practical exercises relevant to activities in the Music Industry on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Music Business</li> <li>• Aruba Music Industry Analysis</li> <li>• Music Distribution</li> <li>• Music Publishing</li> <li>• Live Music</li> <li>• Aruba Music Industry and its Export Potential</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taxation Workshops to help businesses comply with Aruban tax requirements, as well as in providing the latest insights and developments to optimally equip the participants in the following topics: a summary of relevant taxes, the importance of compliance, noncompliance consequences, how to structure your business, special regimes and liabilities.</li> <li>• Workshops: Short-term &amp; long-term marketing strategies, common SEO definitions, SEO link-building: campaign outline, Engage, Google penalties, Google+ business pages, measurement with Google Analytics, long tail keywords, what should you post and use on Social Media sites.</li> <li>• Workshops Contracts in the Creative Industry: Training on real contracts regarding terminologies and what should be included in a contract, what must be taken into account before signing, difference between a person's will and declaration, who is competent to close a contract, which acts are null, what is an offer and when is it accepted, verbal contracts vs written, how and when can a contract be dissolved.</li> <li>• Workshops Business Model Innovation for Exporters: Participants got to know more about how to assess their export readiness, how to use the Business Model Canvas for Exporting, and learn the fundamentals of a Lean Export Business Plan.</li> <li>• Workshops Logistics: These workshops cover key aspects of logistics management, focusing on supply chain optimization, transportation methods, and the coordination of goods for export.</li> <li>• Workshops Shipping Paperwork and Documents Broker/Douane (REX System &amp; CBERA): Participants gain a comprehensive understanding of the required shipping documentation, customs procedures, and the roles of brokers, with special attention to the REX system and CBERA regulations.</li> <li>• Workshops Artificial Intelligence: These sessions explore how AI can transform export operations, from enhancing decision-making to automating processes and improving customer experience in local and global trade.</li> <li>• Workshops E-commerce/ Smart Technology: Focusing on e-commerce platforms and smart technologies, these workshops help businesses expand their reach, streamline operations, and enhance their competitive edge in international markets.</li> <li>• Workshops Blockchain/ Crypto &amp; NFTs: Participants learn about the implications of blockchain technology, cryptocurrencies, and NFTs for international trade, including secure transactions and innovative business models.</li> <li>• Wallet Setup &amp; MetaMask/ OpenSea: These workshops guide participants through setting up digital wallets and using platforms like MetaMask and OpenSea, focusing on the practical aspects of engaging in blockchain-based transactions and the NFT marketplace</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops International Marketing: These workshops provide strategies for effective international marketing, covering market research, cultural nuances, and branding to help businesses promote their products and services globally.</li> <li>• Workshops Doing Business with Asia: Participants learn about the unique business practices, cultural considerations, and market opportunities in various Asian countries, equipping them to build successful trade relationships in this dynamic region.</li> <li>• Workshops Doing Business with the EU: These workshops cover key aspects of conducting business with European Union member countries, including regulatory compliance, market entry strategies, and navigating trade agreements (including the REX System).</li> <li>• Workshops Doing Business with Doral/USA: Focusing on the Doral region and broader U.S. market, these workshops provide insights into local business practices, regulatory requirements, and opportunities for export growth in this key market (including CBI/CBERA regulations and benefits).</li> <li>• Workshops Doing Business with the Dominican Republic: Participants gain an understanding of the business environment, trade regulations, and cultural nuances of the Dominican Republic, helping them to buy and sell products.</li> <li>• Producer Opportunity for a Circular Economy: These workshops explore the principles of a circular economy, highlighting opportunities for producers to innovate and adopt sustainable practices that reduce waste and maximize resource efficiency in global markets.</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity Building Stakeholders and Partners</b>	<b>Technical Workshop Aruba Customs</b>	Exprodesk organized the technical workshop with the topic 'Exporting to the European Union' in collaboration with COSME. This workshop was given to the heads of departments of Aruba Customs and DEACI. It was presented by Mr. James Lenaghan who has ample experience of Customs procedures and requirements, international trade and the rule of origin (Eur 1 form).
	<b>Workshop Quality Infrastructure</b>	Exprodesk organized in collaboration with MetroSystems N.V. intensive 4-day training: 'National Quality Infrastructure' for the staff of the DEACI and the Department of Technical Inspection (DTI).
	<b>Training CBERA/CBTPA</b>	Exprodesk organized in collaboration with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) a comprehensive 2-day training focused on the preferential trade benefits under the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) and the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA). Participants gained in-depth knowledge on claiming duty-free benefits under CBERA and CBTPA, understanding rules of origin, substantial transformation, and product-specific requirements in the U.S. importing process. Additionally, interactive simulations were provided in real-world applications of the concepts learned. This training was given to:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customs Department Aruba</li> <li>• Customs Department Curaçao</li> <li>• Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce and Industry of Aruba/Exprodesk</li> <li>• Ministry of Economic Development Curaçao (MEO)</li> <li>• Free Zone Aruba</li> <li>• CoC and Industry Aruba</li> <li>• CoC and Industry Curaçao</li> <li>• Aruba Trade &amp; Industry Association</li> <li>• Select export companies from Aruba and Curaçao that export to the United States</li> </ul>
<p><b>Export Week Since 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Export Week ‘Conquering New Horizons’</b></p>	<p>Since 2018, Export Week ‘Conquering New Horizons’ has focused on businesses aiming to expand and enhance their competitiveness in the export market. It also caters to those planning to export their products or services in the future, as well as trainers and consultants working with SMEs.</p> <p>Some of the workshops offered during Export Weeks have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop International (ISO) Standards: Increase Your Competitive Advantage</li> <li>• Workshop Masterclass E-commerce: Growing Beyond Borders</li> <li>• Workshop Service Industry: Taking Aruba’s Services to the World (for service providers in professional services, creative industries, and ICT)</li> <li>• Workshop Micro-financing Opportunities</li> <li>• Workshop Online Payment Possibilities on Aruba</li> <li>• Workshop Business Model Innovation (for entrepreneurs, trainers, and consultants)</li> <li>• Workshop Quality Infrastructure Awareness: Promoting Market Access and Competitiveness through Standards and Quality</li> <li>• Workshop Digital Marketing, Branding, Public Relations &amp; Content Writing</li> <li>• Workshop Aruba Export Coaches</li> <li>• Workshop Ecommerce Latest Trends</li> <li>• Workshop Aruba’s Current Export Demand: Potential Export Markets, Industries, and Goods</li> <li>• Workshop Producer Opportunities for a Circular Economy</li> <li>• Workshop ePayments &amp; Loyalty Programs with Crypto-Based Possibilities</li> <li>• Workshop Doing Business with Asia</li> <li>• Workshop Doing Business with Doral/USA</li> <li>• Workshop Doing Business with Europe</li> <li>• Workshop Doing Business with the Dominican Republic</li> <li>• Workshop Evolving to the Next Level: Local Online Payment Methods for the Dutch Caribbean and Beyond</li> <li>• Workshop What You Need to Know: Blockchain Basics</li> <li>• Workshop Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) &amp; Looking Around Online</li> <li>• Workshop Interesting Cryptocurrencies &amp; Gaming and Entertainment</li> <li>• Workshop Wallet Setup &amp; MetaMask/OpenSea</li> <li>• Workshop Wallet Nami &amp; FREE Cryptocurrency</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop FREE Non-Fungible Token (NFT) &amp; Opportunity to Join an Active Community</li> <li>• Workshop Virtual Economy</li> <li>• Workshop Artificial Intelligence</li> </ul>
<p><b>Presentation Stakeholders</b></p>	<p><b>Exprodesk presented trade statics and services to stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation Chamber of Commerce: Presentations during Business Plaza-Step Forward</li> <li>• Presentation for the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs</li> <li>• Presentations to secondary school students, in collaboration with 'Stichting JA IK ARUBA,' focused on export methods, export readiness, and how Exprodesk can support businesses in their export journey.</li> <li>• A webinar titled 'Aruba: Untapped Opportunities Next-Door' was presented for businesses in the Caribbean region. The DEACI, , along with its unit Exprodesk, collaborated with the CoC of Aruba and Freezone Aruba NV to provide information on business and investment opportunities in Aruba. The event was organized by the Caribbean Export Development Agency. The Caribbean Export Development Agency is a prominent organization in the Caribbean region (CARIFORUM) with a broad network of traders doing trade in the region. CARIFORUM is comprised of Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.</li> <li>• Joint presentation with Mr. Bruce Harms, Member of the Caribbean Blockchain Alliance and Managing Director of Full Stack Vision Foundation, to the Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A.). The presentation provided information on the project 'arubaverse.io' goal, which is to educate the Aruban community of artists, entrepreneurs, businesses, organizations on the principles of Web 3.0 and help drive adoption and/or safe practices.</li> <li>• Webinar presentation in collaboration with the Consulate General of the Dominican Republic, represented by Consul General Mr. Luis Eludis Perez Delgado and Vice Consul responsible for the commercial section, Mr. Moises Sanchez Manzueta. The webinar was aimed at Dominican entrepreneurs interested in exporting to Aruba. The presentation covered key topics such as Country Profile, Economic Profile, Regulations, Trade (import/export), Business Profile (overview), Business Culture, Logistics Information, and concluded with a Q&amp;A session.</li> <li>• Presentations were held in collaboration with the Aruba Trade Board for an incoming exploratory mission from Colombia, consisting of 20 participants from the agriculture sector. The group included the Director of the 'Cluster Agroalimentos,' a representative from Comfenalco, a representative from the Medellín Chamber of Commerce, and two consultants from Holland House.</li> </ul>

<b>Projects</b>	<b>The Cultural and Creative Industry Projects</b>	<p>The Cultural and Creative Industry (CCI) projects include the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music Market Ready Project</li> <li>• Tech &amp; Services without Borders Project</li> <li>• Arts without Borders Project</li> <li>• Arubaverse.io</li> </ul> <p>The objectives of these projects are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position the Aruban Creative Industry as a viable alternative and a new economic pillar.</li> <li>• Stimulate export activities that contribute to a sustainable and innovative Aruban economy.</li> <li>• Enhance competitiveness and diversification of the economy.</li> </ul> <p>As part of the Music Market Ready Project, Aruban musicians had their songs played on Miami's 88.9FM WDNA, which reaches audiences across South Florida and can be streamed live worldwide.</p> <p>Participants also developed their export action plans. Furthermore, several creatives are currently exporting their products and services, expanding their global reach.</p>
	<b>The Aruban Professional Service Sector Project</b>	<p>Exprodesk implements a strategy to support SMEs in the Professional Services sector by developing personalized solutions and services. The goal is to identify and prepare companies with realistic export potential, ensuring they are well-equipped for international markets.</p> <p>The key actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuously executing service sector strategies for Professional Services.</li> <li>• Collaborating with sector stakeholders to implement these strategies.</li> <li>• Training and guiding local SMEs in the Professional Services sector to export their services.</li> <li>• Promoting economic trade for the benefit of all trading parties.</li> </ul>
	<b>Empowered Women Exporters Project</b>	<p>Exprodesk started in December 2019 with the new project: Empowered Women Exporters. This project's goal is to design and implement a strategy to support and stimulate export activities among women entrepreneurs by educating them and building their capacity through presentations, workshops, training, courses and networking activities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower women through international trade (challenges and solutions)</li> <li>• Unlock markets for women to trade</li> <li>• Provide insights and training on export strategies</li> <li>• Grant tools and resources to enter new markets</li> <li>• Supply understanding on how to build an export-friendly digital presence</li> <li>• Provide guidance on package flow and preparing an export shipment</li> </ul>
<b>Aruba Showcase</b>	<b>Exprodesk Website</b>	<p>Exprodesk contacts Aruban entrepreneurs to offer them the opportunity to showcase their products or services (made in Aruba) on its website. Interested entrepreneurs are required to complete a consent form, as Exprodesk only facilitates the display of their products. Exprodesk and the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce and Industry are not</p>

		involved in transactions related to the goods and/or services provided by the Aruban entrepreneurs through the website. The goal is to expose and promote the products and services that Aruba has to offer, making it easier for buyers to make informed purchase decisions. The Aruba Showcase web page launched on March 15, 2024.
	<b>Aruba Showcase Events</b>	<p>The 'Aruba Showcase Event' took place in both March and November of 2024, offering a vibrant celebration of Aruba's local products and talent. These events highlighted Aruba's rich craftsmanship and creativity, offering a platform for local businesses to showcase their products and gain greater visibility both locally and internationally.</p> <p>Aruba Showcase Events (March &amp; November 2024). Both events featured two major highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Exhibition of Original Aruban Products:</i> Attendees had the opportunity to explore and purchase a wide variety of locally produced items, including hot sauces, cosmetics (soap, makeup, deodorant, and sunscreen), chocolates, men's grooming products, cigars made entirely in Aruba, artworks, wines and liquors made from cashews and honey, mango and coconut tequila infused with seawater, glass jewelry, swimwear, sustainable fashion items (clothing and accessories), and much more.</li> </ul> <p>Launch of the 'Aruba Showcase Webpage' (March 2024): The March event also marked the official launch of the 'Aruba Showcase Webpage,' a digital platform designed to continue promoting and selling local products after the event. This platform aims to connect Aruba's businesses with a wider, global audience, fostering economic growth and expanding the reach of local products worldwide.</p>
<b>Trade Missions</b>	<b>Trade fairs, expo, presentations, B2B meetings on products and services</b>	<p>Through these trade missions, Exprodesk helps local businesses connect with international markets, fostering growth and expanding global trade opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exprodesk plays a vital role in assisting RVO with trade missions that help local businesses expand their potential in international markets by exposing them to key opportunities.</li> <li>• In addition, Exprodesk collaborates closely with the Centro de Exportación e Inversión de la República Dominicana (CEI-RD). As a result, Exprodesk actively informs, promotes, organizes, and leads relevant trade missions between Aruban (potential) exporters and importers.</li> </ul> <p>Notable trade missions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HUB Cámara Santo Domingo (since 2018): This B2B Expo is the largest trade fair in the Caribbean, offering a platform for exhibitions, business meetings, product launches, workshops, and presentations.</li> <li>• ALES (since 2018): The VIII Annual Convention for Professional Services, covering sectors such as engineering, architecture, accounting, legal services, management consulting, medical tourism, spa and wellness, cinema, ITC, and apps.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agroalimentaria (since 2019): A prominent trade fair in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, focusing on the agro-food industry.</li></ul> <p>Exprodesk also assists the Government of Aruba with outgoing missions, such as the Trade Mission to Suriname in 2024, further supporting local businesses in exploring international markets.</p> <p>Additionally, Exprodesk works closely with Holland House Colombia to support incoming missions, facilitating connections and business opportunities between Aruba and Colombia.</p>
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## Appendix 3: CoC Events and Programs

Chamber of Commerce (CoC/KvK)	
Events and Programs	Description
Lectures, info sessions, presentations and workshops from 2018 to 2024	<p><b>2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masterclass Intention Setting</li> <li>• Kick off mixer &amp; meet the board 2024</li> <li>• Manager Port Organization</li> <li>• Lecture Business &amp; Relationships</li> <li>• Seminar speak up, unmute and stand strong</li> <li>• Business Plaza-Get Started</li> <li>• Buki di Pret</li> <li>• Webinar Dutch Caribbean meets Panama</li> <li>• Femcity International Virtual Community Call</li> <li>• Ostad 200 Incubator program IHA</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New introduced tax system</li> <li>• ESG session</li> <li>• Carnival Networking &amp; Meet the Board</li> <li>• New Waste Policy</li> <li>• Cyber Security Session</li> <li>• Pensioen in eigen beheer</li> <li>• BBO at the border</li> <li>• Business Plaza</li> <li>• Buki di Pret</li> <li>• Pre-Event SMILE</li> <li>• Successful Logistics Solutions</li> <li>• CoC Art Exhibition</li> <li>• Social Media Masterclass</li> <li>• Business Empowerment Week</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Marketing is and is not</li> <li>• Lecture SVB</li> <li>• Women Entrepreneurs Event Online</li> <li>• Business Plaza GS – Coaching</li> <li>• Instagram Masterclass for busy business owners</li> <li>• Town Hall Meeting</li> <li>• Avoid getting stuck in the middle</li> <li>• Buki Pret</li> <li>• 'Tecnica Practico y Profesional di Sales Forecasting'</li> <li>• Art Exhibition</li> <li>• BPGS in San Nicolas</li> <li>• Incoming TM Panama</li> <li>• Workshop Financial Administration</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Startup Day</li> <li>• Business License</li> <li>• Vision Board Party</li> <li>• Info session EU grant Erasmus program</li> <li>• Buki di Pret</li> <li>• ACP-intern</li> <li>• Cursus Arbeidsrecht</li> <li>• Workshop team building</li> <li>• Art Exhibition</li> <li>• Info session doing business with Aruba</li> <li>• How to manage your budget</li> <li>• Social Media Masterclass</li> <li>• Erasmus Young Entrepreneurs Program</li> <li>• Online Sessions</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Plaza Step Forward</li> <li>• CoC workshop The Power of Visualization</li> <li>• Workshop Creative Thinking</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Marketing Automation</li> <li>• Workshop Basic Data Analysis for Business</li> <li>• CoC tutorial – How to change your business address</li> <li>• Virtual Business Plaza</li> <li>• Online Session</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2019</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Plaza-Step Forward!</li> <li>• Info night- Doing Business in Panama</li> <li>• Trade mission match makings Puerto Rico</li> <li>• Lecture Good Governance!</li> <li>• Minibar</li> <li>• Town Hall Meeting</li> <li>• Info session Trade Mission Suriname</li> <li>• Mediation Workshop</li> <li>• Practical session – Get Connected to Mijn KvK</li> <li>• Wereldbank Sessie</li> <li>• Wereldbank Sessie 2</li> <li>• Business Plaza Get-started</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2018</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Plaza-Step Forward</li> <li>• Incubators focus group session</li> <li>• Workshop Sales Forecasting</li> <li>• Chamber meets the Entrepreneur in the Construction Industry</li> <li>• Lezing Acoso Sexual</li> <li>• Seminar Corporate Governance</li> <li>• Lecture: The importance of Public Speaking</li> <li>• CoC Art Fair part 2 Stichting Mira</li> <li>• Business Kick-off</li> <li>• Lezing How to detect Fraud in your company</li> <li>• Workshop Analysis Practices for Business!</li> <li>• Business Plaza- Get Started</li> <li>• Introduction course EI 2018</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4: ATIA's Services and Events

<b>Aruba Trade and Industry Association (ATIA)</b>	
<b>Services and Events</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Free Clinics for Members</b>	Free Clinics to members on issues related to the following topics: Finance, Human Capital, Legal, IT, Tax Compliance, Labor Laws, PR and Marketing.
<b>Education and Training Center</b>	Members and Non-Members can subscribe to ATIA's Education & Training Center, where they can receive information about the activities, courses, training and workshops offered by ATIA in collaboration with several professionals/firms throughout the year.
<b>Info Sessions/ Town Hall sessions for Members</b>	Throughout the year ATIA hosts info sessions and Town Hall sessions for members on different relevant topics or on-going issues affecting the market. Sessions hosted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bo Impuesto</li> <li>• BTW</li> <li>• BBO at the Border</li> <li>• Digital Profit Tax Forms</li> <li>• Q&amp;A sessions with Customs Department</li> <li>• Cybersecurity</li> </ul>
<b>Continued Financial Excellence Program</b>	Different Financial Courses tailored for the Financial Sector in Aruba, in collaboration with the top Financial Education provider in the Netherlands.
<b>Future of Work Masterclasses</b>	This masterclass' goal is to help companies deal efficiently and effectively with the ever-changing business landscape. Topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mindset and Generations in the workplace</li> <li>Ethics in AI and Marketing</li> <li>Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Governance</li> <li>Cybersecurity</li> <li>Sustainable business culture</li> </ul>
<b>Start-up week</b>	A week-long program provides entrepreneurs with all the information to start a business, from setup, back-office, taxes, marketing, branding, bank accounts, and payment systems.
<b>ATIA's Business Mixers</b>	Networking is a key part of running a successful business. For this reason, ATIA organizes different business mixers throughout the year. Some are for Members only, and some are open to the public.
<b>ATIA's Annual Corporate Event</b>	Branded as Aruba's Largest Networking event, this event is for the business community where a keynote speaker is featured on a topic relevant for commerce with entertainment as well.
<b>LIDERA (Bi-annually)</b>	LIDERA is Aruba's Premiere motivational and personal development conference, with our goal is to help you become the best self you can be. We do this by creating a stimulating, modern and fun environment to grow together with like-minded leaders. <p>2022 - LIDERA: Purpose as Power 2024 - LIDERA: Limitless</p>
<b>EXPO ATIA</b>	ATIA's newest event, where we will bring together a showcase of our member companies, with a career and job fair, and a VIP networking event at night. The perfect balance to inform and motivate our future leaders to enter the Aruban job market, with some surprises along the way in true "ATIA-style".
<b>Workshops and Seminars</b>	ATIA organizes different workshops and seminars open for the public and members alike. Most of the time workshops are in collaboration with different industry experts. Examples of past workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declarant Douane</li> <li>• People management Seminar</li> <li>• Labor Law</li> <li>• Disciplinary Actions</li> <li>• Termination</li> <li>• Crucial Conversations</li> <li>• Building Lasting and Empowering Networks</li> </ul>
<b>Lunch and Learn Sessions</b>	ATIA organizes for its members different lunch and learning sessions to discuss ongoing topics. In the past we discussed: Digital payments, AI, taxes, etc.

## Appendix 5: Action Plan for FZA 2025 – 2028

This plan is aimed at businesses involved in trade (such as drop shipment) and light industrial activities. Service-based operations are not included at this stage, as the necessary amendments to the free zone law are still pending approval.

Free Zone Aruba		
<b>1. Targeted Campaign</b>	<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch campaigns specifically aimed at local businesses, clearly explaining the benefits (low 2% profit tax, no import duties, access to new markets).</li> <li>• Update marketing material, specifically targeted at local entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Boost online presence.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Simplified Entry Procedures</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplify the process for starting a business in the free zone (less paperwork, clear step-by-step guides, one-stop-shop, personal support).</li> <li>• Set up a special helpdesk at strategic locations (airport, port, main street) to guide entrepreneurs.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Building International Trade Networks</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with organizers of trade fairs, missions, and online platforms to connect businesses with foreign buyers.</li> <li>• Form strategic alliances with other stakeholders (Exprodesk, CoC, RVO, etc.) to provide SMEs valuable trade and market intelligence.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Specific Infrastructure and Services</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build shared warehouses, flexible office spaces, that businesses can rent or share.</li> <li>• Ensure that our information board (online) is regularly updated with the latest workshops, seminars, conferences organized by our stakeholders such as the CoC, Customs, DEACI, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Measurable Goals and Evaluations</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively collect feedback from businesses and adjust policies quickly as needed.</li> <li>• Monitor global trends and advise our customers about opportunities and trends worldwide.</li> </ul>